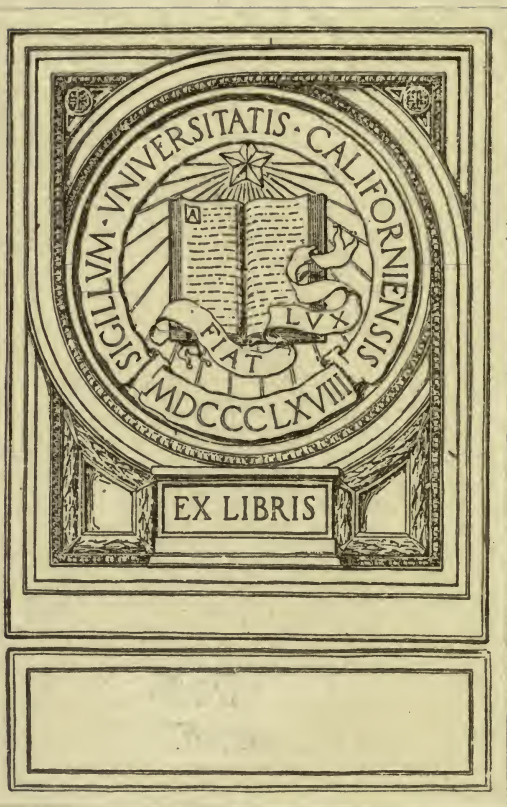


JOY OF TYROL









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JOY OF TYROL



JOY OF TYROL

A Human Revelation

EDITED BY

J. M. BLAKE

WITH 111 ORIGINAL ILLUSTRATIONS
DRAWN BY THE LADY



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Dedicated

BY ORDER OF THE LADY

TO

ALL SUCH AS BE

HINDERED FROM

THE

JOY OF TYROL

THE EDITOR'S EXPLANATION

MY DEAR BLAKE,—

. . . I look back on the time when day after day I was receiving these letters as the happiest period of my life. Circumstances now being such that, by a simple expedient, I have extracted every clue to the writer's personality, I see no reason for keeping the letters to myself. . . . Also I have full permission to give them to the public. . . . Please see them through the press.

J. S. M. D.

It was a small service for an old tutor and friend to ask. I have done my best; and if to make a prettier book of it I have duplicated a few of the drawings, those who love the Lady for her sketches as much as I do will not be resentful.

J. M. BLAKE.



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INNSBRUCK





INNSBRUCK

I

EVERYTHING I see at this moment is red. I am in a blazing temper with my Aunt Julianne and all her ways, especially her unholy knack of spoiling people's plans. I arrive here, inquire for my sister and her Ronnells—a yawning hotel porter gives me two telegrams and a bow!

"Soup boiling over, extra day necessary to cool her down. LOIS."

"Soup" is the aforesaid's nickname which has stuck to her from our nursery days.

"We wait your sister here. RONNELL," means I suppose that he and his sister stay on at Carlsbad till Lois can travel with them. I was an all-fired idiot to let Lois ask the Ronnells. If they had not been going to pick her up at Carlsbad she would have stayed at home and come out with me yesterday; as it is, this holiday is already in rags. Don't waste the situation. Make a three-light window of me visible from your stall:

1. Tired curate on Charing Cross platform.
2. Same, leaving train at Innsbruck with joy of mountains on his brow, uplifted by vision of long corridor of blessed weeks between estates of Curacy and Benefice.
3. Same, prone over mat at entrance to corridor, with nose flattened on two beastly telegrams.

JOY OF TYROL,

Let the scale of colouring be sad, and below, on a brass plate, inscribe :

Martyr of the 1st rank, who, having slept for weeks before the accident with Baedeker's " Eastern Alps " under his pillow, had his beautiful vision broken by the gouty bones of a ruthless old woman.

It's positively indecent ; she will keep Lois for days if I misjudge not, and if the Ronnells come on ahead—— !

It was an ill-assorted party at the best : Ronnell more silent if possible than of yore, a sort of intelligent dumb animal, half hermit and half squire ; and his sister, whom I met some years ago and have avoided like the plague ever since, a self-satisfied little Pharisee who looked on every one except herself and the holy aunts she lived with from a platform of sanctimonious pity, because they three alone had latchkeys into Heaven. An esoteric minx as ever quoted texts.

Having got which off my chest I feel better, and will see what I can do to make up for what I lost in the sleeping-car last night.

II

INNSBRUCK.

Out of a hearty sleep I awoke on top of a ridiculous dream, that is, on top of a mountain whose snowy crest you and I were worrying to tell us how old it was ; from a distance a mighty peak was announcing—with a blush like a little girl's—that the sun was getting up, and you were lighting your pipe, which was stuffed with edelweiss, by the help of one of last night's telegrams, when a jarring knock rapped everything back to dreamland. This was handed in :

" Aunt very ill. Have written. LOIS."

INNSBRUCK

It is characteristic. Lois thinks her state serious, so drops the nickname. Pain gives the body an added sacredness in her eyes—dear old girl.

It is a golden day. The giant Sentinels, white chains across their breasts, gaze down through my open windows with an air of mighty wisdom. I wish they would give evidence of it by explaining what the Ronnells will do now!

To be quite candid, I am afraid of that girl. The mere recollection of her gives me the "creeps"—prattling "don'ts," "must nots," "wicked," "sinfuls," all over the kitchen garden, when she ought to have been filling her mouth with gooseberries. Lois cannot come; this perhaps is coming instead! Delightful!? Taste the position: I had just been confirmed, and had decided to go into the Church, and, like a boy, was sensitively silent on such matters, yet this prig, with the brazen curiosity of a custom-house officer, asked me "whether I was converted."

That kind of possession cometh not out even by prayer and fasting, so far as my experience goes, and the more I think of it the more preposterous this plan of Lois looks. I recall also her two aunts, rich, skinny old maids with religious mania, talking incessantly of "The Truth," "This Dispensation," "The Scarlet Woman," etc., who ran a private Mission Hall opposite their Parish Church for what they called "True Believers," and were known by the county as "The Squirrels"—why, I know not, unless that they were for ever bustling along in their little cage of ideas and never getting anywhere.

Forgive a running pen, but see what straits I am like to find myself in. It surely indicates a very positive element in her that across eight years there remains as unpleasantly clear a memory of a prig with a pigtail

JOY OF TYROL

and a Mission as if she had scratched it into my mind with her own nails.

Nevertheless Lois is devoted, and Lois is not any kind of fool, so she may have points now, though I know them not, the "Ronnell girl" being the one and only barred subject between us.

Go to, I must walk off this burden.

Much Later, Wiser and Sadder.

A queer little place this !

Not my bedroom or Innsbruck—the whole thing, Sun, Moon, and Ronnells.

I was supping solitary soup in the garden restaurant when without a word of warning they appeared : he, whom I last saw eighteen months since, only said " Ah " ; she, who is now tall and not ill-favoured, primly asked if they might join me.

She reported that " Lady Julianne was unwell, Lois felt compelled to stay till the attack was over, had insisted that they should come on ; the journey had been torturously hot, and the idea of rest was equally grateful to her body, mind, and spirit." Terse and snippy ! During dinner Ronnell twice said " Not bad," once over a trout, once over his coffee, and I kept his sister safely within the weather and the trains.

A pretty start to several weeks' companionship—a frigid woman, a mute, and no Lois ! I have a letter from her, by the way, a queer inconsequent tangle about this girl, beseeching me not to be prejudiced, but giving no guarantee of her own arrival. I am not the least bit happy. *Prosit.*

P.S.—I beg to observe that her friend's lips are not so much like the back of a stuck envelope as one is accustomed to find in persons of highly finished religiosity. This is the best I can do for her.

INNSBRUCK

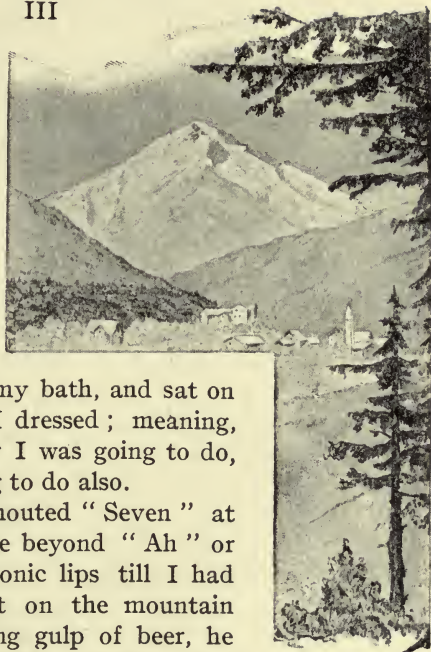
III

INNSBRUCK.

Thanks for letter. Yes, "holiday rations" you shall have, though by the look of things they will not be pretty eating.

Ronnell — a droll person to live with— was in my room before I was up, still there when I got back from my bath, and sat on smoking dumbly while I dressed ; meaning, I found, that whatever I was going to do, he, like Ruth, was going to do also.

From the time he shouted "Seven" at my door not a syllable beyond "Ah" or "Yes" passed his laconic lips till I had him up at a restaurant on the mountain side, where, after a long gulp of beer, he rose to "Superb." Haze of morning playing an angel's part, spires of Innsbruck stretching themselves like a pale anemone in green sea-water, the Inn valley an apocalyptic thing such as men see through tears, did not catch him one little bit. But the crowd did ; he watched them lapping plates of meat, gargling soup, and burying their noses in tureens of beer with the concentrated interest of a philosopher, and said of an unnecessarily fat man that Byron's line should be cut upon his gravestone, "'Tis Greece, but living Greece no more," and of an obese Frau who drank four big beers in succession, that "It must be a more



JOY OF TYROL



exacting job than one realizes to keep such a figure cool."

But he is very like a dog. One forgets betweenwhiles that he does speak.

At lunch his sister, who appears to be out daily with the worms, turned up with these drawings, said Lois told her I shared my holidays with you, as far as letters could do it, and asked if she might help.

I jumped at the offer, and I promise she shall have every encouragement, her sketches being finer than her dogmatics.

This is a girl botheringly shy, I find. Men have no doubt kept their distance—those aunts are prickly; perhaps also she feels the awkward tension—in any case she conducts herself like a nun. After tea, which we had at a village up above, she strolled off without a word to sketch, and did not return till the carriage was waiting. This is not the sort of thing I expected, but the drawing is neat.

Lois will sneeze over the peppery expostulation I have sent her. This playing at politeness to a girl who at the back of her shyness is no doubt praying for the conversion of my soul to Squirrelism is getting on my nerves.

Now about this Golden Roof—the freak of one Count Frederick of Tyrol, dead these five centuries, who

INNSBRUCK

attained the nickname of "Empty Pockets," and out of sheer cussedness erected a carved stone balcony and roofed it with gold. When one looks at its gleaming tiles, in one's mind's eye one sees him on his balcony looking down on passers-by with the thumbnail of his right hand to the tip of his noble nose, and his fingers radiating towards them, as who should say "Empty Pockets. Ahem !"

I am in no mood for writing. I am so terribly tired of her it seems months since she arrived, but she draws well enough.

IV

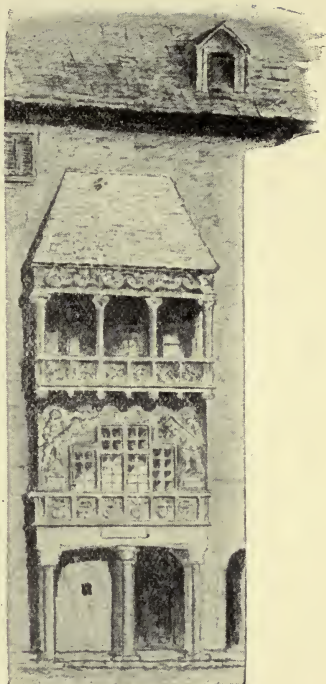
INNSBRUCK.

Anything in this distracting world can be argued about except the deliverances of Lois ; and alas ! a lengthy explanation of her doings has arrived, together with an order that we move on to-morrow, promising to join us three days hence at Sterzing, over the Breñner.

Pleasant going this—Lois and I plan out a tramp, another pair is shot in, and then the leading lady does not turn up !

What in boredom and blankness we are going to do this day, the cloudless vault of Heaven may know, I——

Here lounged in Ronnell, wanting to know how I proposed to entertain him, like a dog expecting things to be thrown for it. I took him up to Berg Isel,



JOY OF TYROL

where Andreas Hofer, the innkeeper, led the Tyrolese against Napoleon's troops. He knew every detail of the war, and talked quite a lot for him. "Craggy publican" for Hofer, "too elemental for Boney" for the mountain troops, were two of his chuckles between draughts at a beer garden. He talked in tabloids and drank in tanks. At lunch he picked up the drawing (below¹) of the Jesuits' Church, which was done yesterday by evening light, whistled softly, and said: "Marsalys dear, I always understood that really good people would regard this as the dwelling-place of the Scarlet Woman of the Apocalypse ;

personally, I don't know the difference between her and Little Red Riding Hood—perhaps there is none—but I am shocked to find you drawing sin so beautifully." It was a prodigious sentence for him, and produced the most curious mixture of forced smile and deep red blush, but not a word in reply. This sort of thing is embarrassing for a third party, however much she deserves it, but without doubt she is a freak. Look at the Maria Theresien Strasse (opposite¹), wonderfully fine and with real feeling, yet her conception of life forbids her to find any interest or enjoyment outside of what "Squirrelism" esteems matters of the Spirit.



¹ Editor.

INNSBRUCK

10.15 *p.m.*

Yes, without doubt she is a freak !

At dinner, with a view simply to shocking her, I suggested a native song and dance entertainment, at which idea, to my complete astonishment, she jumped ; so we—most comic of all psychological triangles—went to a music-hall in which fish might be kippered, and



there sat till a quarter of an hour ago, surrounded by holiday-makers who drank and puffed, cleared throats, and cried "Hoch" in an atmosphere as thick with noise and tobacco smoke as you could find anywhere outside Hades.

The folk-songs and merry dances made jolly enough entertainment, but to me the most entertaining part of all was Miss Ronnell with eyes and ears riveted on the performers, as hilariously entering into it as any ordinary

JOY OF TYROL

healthy-minded girl. Neither the noisiest songs nor the most spirited dances—punctuated with resounding kisses—seemed to shock her in the least; and though it was of course as innocent as sponge fingers, the “worldliness” of it ought to have turned her into a pillar of salt.

To me, her pleasure in it seemed so incongruous that whenever the door swung open I expected to see the spirits of her weird aunts flapping in, out of the night, like bats; it may be that given sufficient smoke the Squirrel-spirit is stifled for the time being.

She distinctly is not what bootmakers call a “stock size,” but the whole arrangement is wretched. Talk she will not, looks intelligent, is—a dummy.

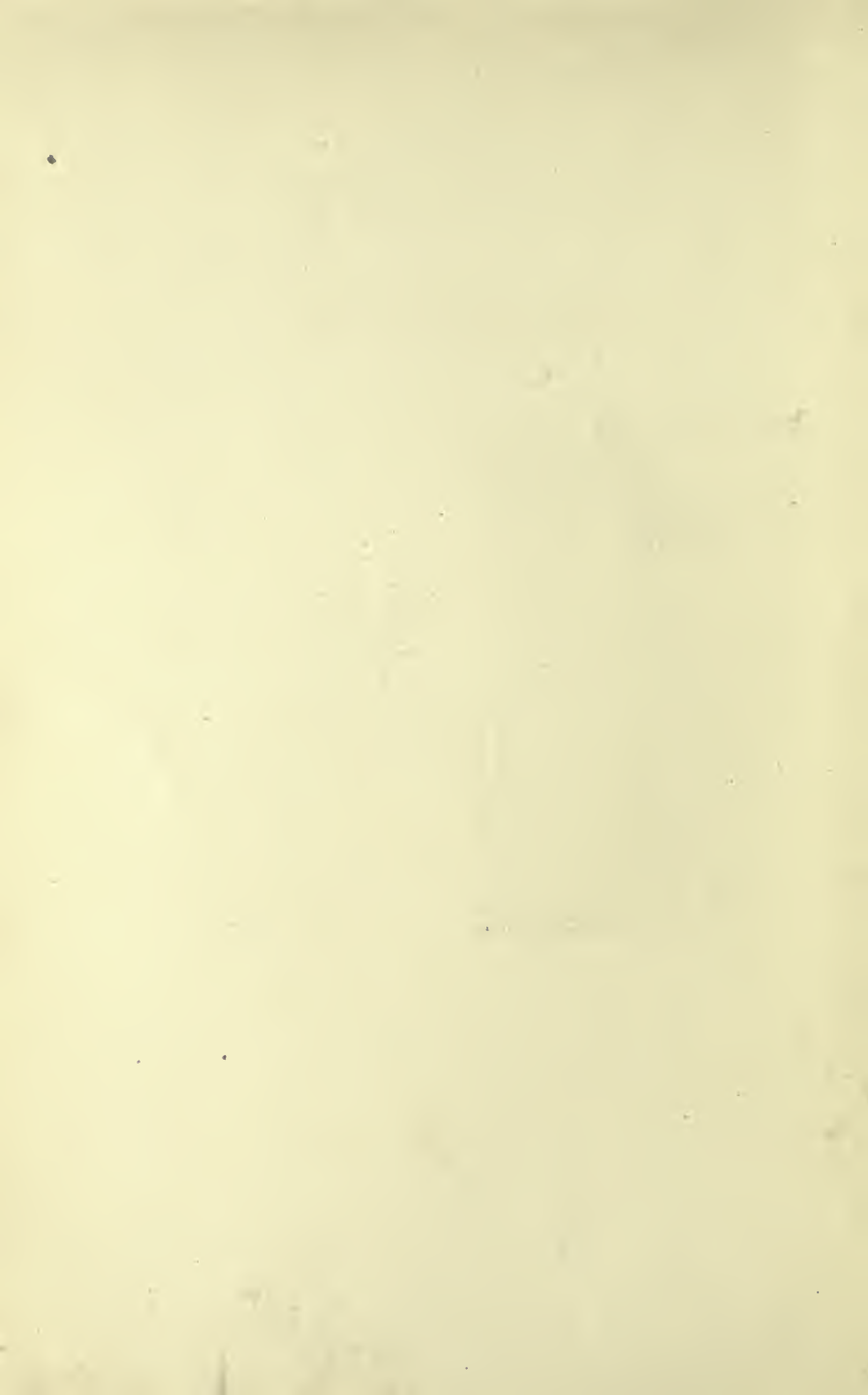
To-morrow we set forth, and, as the Hexameter said, our feet are our fortune.

Heaven send it may amuse you to read of, more than it does me to be in it. I feel like a rat in a trap, without even the slice of cheese to amuse me. Amen.

The little ship I call Me is letting down its anchor in the bay men call Sleep.

MATREI-AM-BRENNER





MATREI-AM-BRENNER

V

THIS afternoon I sent Euclid about his business.

No three-sided arrangement can have two of its sides or two of its angles equal. The triangle ought never to have been invented : the square, circle, parallel lines, if you will ; the triangle is an impudent intrusion on an already overburdened world.

Ronnell and I walked to a half-way inn, his sister there overtook us in a cab, and we walked on here together.

I had dreamed last night that she was letting off her spiritual convictions to those dancers in searching vernacular from the top of our table, and her last words " gnashing of teeth " so stuck in my mind and roused my curiosity that I made a pretty little vow to myself that I would find out exactly what she thought of the entertainment.

Not one comma or hyphen ! Forceps couldn't do it. Ronnell walks with eyes on the path like a cart-horse and silent as a fungus—if he asks for a match he thinks it an adequate share in conversation for hours—but his ears lose nothing, an absolute blight on conversation with a third party, who is shy.

By three different routes I led to my dancers, but got nothing beyond the admission that it was a novelty to her !—a most provoking person whom Lois declares has brains, yet—this is what I endured.

JOY OF TYROL

Our hostel wears the wrinkles of Time. My spacious room has three beds, two sofas, and a couple of large oak tables. High times those old posting days must have been. I should have chummed with the driver; the Ronnells could have found comfortable seats at the back and enjoyed the scenery together in silence.

But let me not fail to record that once this day I smiled.

At a Saint I did it. On our arrival a servant was sent for water, and pushing out my jalousies I saw her filling jugs at the village fountain, with St. John of Nepomuk, patron of cleanliness, standing over the tap gazing down out of his solemn wooden eyes, wondering why she hurried so for three ordinary happy travellers. To you it may appear a reversal that the man in the street should be a Saint. I have reached a stage beyond surprises, but I smiled. Man alive, I declare that had you ever told me a day might come when I should be bored to distraction among mountains I would have held ice to your skull and called in a specialist. As it is, my little soul is sick for lack of a tablespoonful of human companionship to be taken half an hour before meals!

Oh that your hunting eyes and bloodhound brains were here to get the revelations given by these people to the kindness of the sky, as the fields give theirs in flowers, for whatever this Ronnell girl may be, the Tyrolese have been as the Lilies of the Field—their kinsfolk—for ages.

Gloomy as the walk was, there abide in memory five separate sorts of gentian born in the purple, stonecrops yellow, pink, and crimson peeping at us with earnest little eyes, dry hay filling the afternoon with the fragrance of a million petals, and acres of corn like cloth of gold.

MATREI-AM-BRENNER

What ho ! The smell of savoury meats——

!! — ? — !!! — & ! — : , .

Dinner came, with—as you see—trimmings !

Replenished within, I am gayer of humour. Two hours ago, the tug of many hungry minutes at my middle played the Cat and Banjo on my spirits, as you can detect.

A full choir of swallows sang grace, and blessing descended on us. We were merrier than we have yet been—the topic of dogs exorcised our dullness. This inn possesses one—portrait herewith; equally accurate other way round, this dog possesses an inn, a place adapted for storage and consumption of food, edifice of preposterous proportions built up by injudicious charities. He had his chin on my knee while I was telling Miss Ronnell about my bellicose Aberdeen terrier, with not an unnecessary ounce of tissue on his precious bones, and tried to blink approval but could not—his skin was so tight.

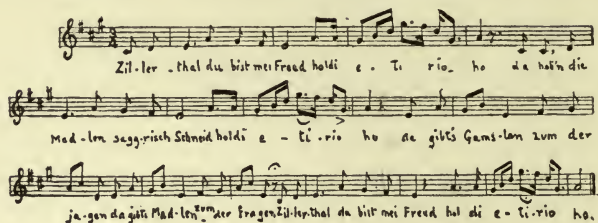


Her brother breeds Borzois scientifically; she “loves all dogs,” and talked intelligently of several she knows “intimately.”

Dulce est desipere—— But to be serious, while I was holding my organs submissive against the advent of food the last beams of day were wandering among the fir-trees and hesitating on the hill-tops; also, a tall Crucifix so placed that the Face looked on me, lifted my thoughts up. With the soft light upon His brow and outstretched arms, He Himself seemed to be giving welcome to His mountains, and in spite of everything I felt it good to be here.

JOY OF TYROL

This is a verse of a song from last night set down from memory! She hath an ear it seems.



But I must stop. I have smoked two ten-heller cigars over you, which is more than you are worth.

My room is aromatic with scent of dried flowers from cart of hay left beneath my window—horses are off to bed, so am I. Good-night from us all.

Most obedient, humble servants,

Me,

Swallows,

Swollen dog, and

Our highly esteemed and tender friend
the late Mrs. Fowl.

Yes of course, and the Ronnells—

hang them!

VI

MATREI-AM-BRENNER.

7.30 a.m.

Profoundly absorbing is Night in the spell of its secrets, with a myriad eyes, each one a whole world watching its silence. Before dawn I was leaning into it. The Heaven-born stream on its way from glacier to ocean hardly dared ripple as it passed through, and even the first twitterings of the birds among the darkness seemed an intrusion.

MATREI-AM-BRENNER

But the sounds of the new day kept me at the window—the creak of a door, the striking of a match, snort of a horse, crackling of dry branches in a stove, a cock-crow, gasp of a man pulling on difficult boots, sneeze of a child in the fresh air after a night of carbonic acid gas, the yawn of the village watchman, the bubbling of water into a tin pail, the light tread of a woman going from the inn, the snoring—— All right, dear man, no new Sherlock Holmes is here to enrich the bookstalls; this is simplicity itself; the intense silence makes every hint stand out like a star.

Listen. Religion came next with bells raucous from centuries of hard screaming to the people to hurry up.

“Clink-clink—Clink-clink” from the procession of hob-nailed saints was crude but devout music, like the tapping of cold little knuckles on an Imperial Porch—it did not jar upon the dawn.

Eavesdropping in pyjamas, however, even at the best is chilly work. I went to bed again and enjoyed comfortable thoughts of these simple souls starting the day in sincere conviction that a miracle has taken place—that the Son of God has been sacrificed afresh before their eyes. And then! the horrid spectacle of the Ronnell girl's Squirreligion—to coin a word—rose like a cold skeleton before me, but the warm sheets were too much for it and I did not even dream. Now for breakfast.

GRIES-AM-BRENNER.
After Lunch.

This girl is after breaking some of her idols to see what deadly sin feels like, I suspect. I found her at a table under an acacia, as fresh as a salad. She had been up since dawn, she said, had ordered our eggs, and engaged a carriage, as it would be nice to have a long afternoon here and get time for sketching. Bowels of the Puritans!

JOY OF TYROL

Sunday to me is not less sacred that I walk, talk, and—if occasion offer—laugh as well as worship on it ; but these high jinks with her aunts' most precious Idol look very like revolution. She was cheerfully secular over her coffee and rolls, talked Lois and her virtues, declared herself dying to see her, and looked as far from the grave as a healthy person could.

In her cab there pulled us what, uninstructed, I should have called a pair of devils. The driver assured me they were mules—mules allow them. Neither had the smallest idea of what was expected from it, and of themselves expected nothing save that, whatever happened, they should be amused. We got past a motor-car, how I will not say, being cautious of prying into the supernatural ; but thus far I will go—save for the cool head of a human chauffeur we should at this moment be part of a heap of minced luggage, bones, steel, and indiarubber.

At our side the clear blue Sill nodded along like a procession of pale forget-me-nots in pilgrimage ; above, pines stood in ranks up to the snow ; and where the wind found corn or oats it stroked them gently into waves of greeny gold, like soft fur on some glossy mammal lying flat upon the fields.

But about this embarrassing young woman. Nature of her own design made the Tyrolers a cordial race. She goes one better, and by a glance makes them her friends ! Within half a minute of our arrival she was on smiling terms with the whole female staff, who were all on the look-out for some way in which they could serve her.

At lunch we added a new topic to our repertory, by the mercy of the woman who waited, whose cheeks were like crimson Russia-leather. I described her as a daughter of sunshine. " Yes," Ronnell crooned, " sun-

GRIES-AM-BRENNER

shine and frosty air, and after that the drink. And may there be no——” which his sister cut short with such an elaborate defence of peasant life in these parts that I wondered where she learned her skill in lying.

A la carte and ready money at each meal—the way here—it fell to me to pay, and when I gave a tip in keeping with her colour the woman clutched her apron corner nervously, and asked Miss Ronnell to persuade her “Herr Gemahl” that Gries was a place adapted for a long stay!

Her face went, if possible, redder than the waitress’, and I, remembering a mislaid pipe, am here with it still.

Queer, catercorned person, most girls would have laughed at the mistake and forgotten it. It was grim enough for me to cry over—her husband! but she, well, she is as shy as a guinea-pig outside its hutch for the first time.

By the freaks of Destiny, if I had to spend time with people not of my choice it seems hard not to have even a normal woman in the picnic, but no doubt it is a fine discipline whereby I am attaining merit.



Ten of the Clock.

After tea I found her sketching on the hillside, and lay down with my pipe to talk over to-morrow's start, etc. When Ronnell joined us she rattled off the biography of the crimson waitress in a series of rather neat

JOY OF TYROL

descriptions—girlhood, courting, marriage, farm-life, weddings, festivals, and so on.

When I came up here for my pipe she had sat on and let the

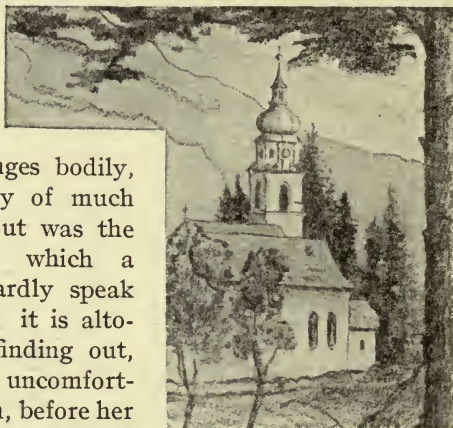
woman chatter; the gate marked "Private" must have been

lifted off its hinges bodily, for the intimacy of much which she let out was the sort of thing which a peasant will hardly speak of to a priest; it is altogether beyond finding out, this complex, uncomfortable girl. When, before her

brother came up, I told her of your hunger for mountains, she spoke so sympathetically that I felt sure there is something kind and nice about her, but alas! that inquisition in the kitchen garden buzzes in my memory like a gnat.

This church is typical, whitewashed, wood-tiled, red Eastern-looking spire.

To-morrow Lois! jolly! jolly! jolly!



STERZING-AM-BRENNER





STERZING-AM-BRENNER

VII

A STUPID letter, a shifty telegram, but of Lois herself not an eyelash !

That the deplorable aunt has got very much on the poor girl's nerves, is clear from the way she writes, as thus, at the top of her vocabulary, "Be your magnificently generous self" (Small quinine, please !), "so that Marsalys may lose her shyness and have a chance of showing her great beauty of soul," and follows on with a life-size portrait of the "very Marsalys," every other word underlined, an analysis of her past and a rigmarole about her "phenomenal development," much of which is undecipherable, "written by broken light at the bedside of Soup between her bubblings over." That is Lois, the rest is nerves, and she ends with a whoop at "the thought of catching up the tramps at Sterzing-am-Blessing."

The telegram is a beast :

"To-day not possible, hope perhaps to-morrow."

Ronnell under such a shock would say he was "bloatered," and bloatered he would be if tobacco could do it. Being as I be I wired :

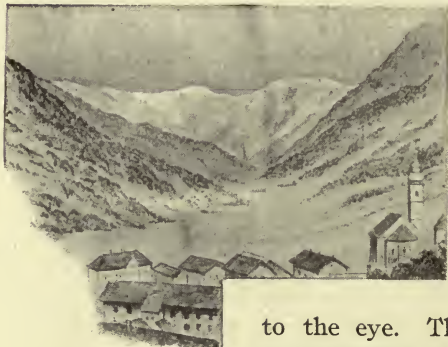
"Leave Soup to own particular liquid destiny. Come at once. Very urgent."

These postponements are intolerable ; she might remember I did not plan to spend my time with the Ronnells. But why should I drag you into my private

JOY OF TYROL

little quagmire? As a matter of fact, working on a resolve that whatever happened I would enjoy it, I have had quite a good day. I am far too drowsy to give special items, but will do what I can.

At Gossensass a providential table before an inn gave us halt. We



drank a bumper to the vast furrows of glacier ploughed along the sky twelve miles away, whose portrait I send.

It was a walk full of excitement

to the eye. The road opened new combinations of hills at every turn, like a person showing his portfolio, watching your face as he turns from picture to picture. I was wondering what it thought about us, when Miss Ronnell, as if thinking aloud, broke out:

“ Oh, those mountains, their infinite movement !
Still moving with you :
For ever some new head or breast of them
Thrusts into view
To observe the intruder : you see it
If quickly you turn,
And, before they escape, you surprise them.”

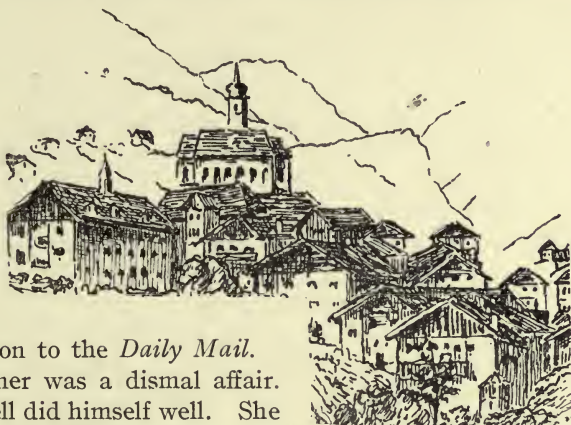
And it came out that she reads Browning, or, as she put it, takes him regularly as hypophosphates for her soul !

Prize Puzzle :

Elect saint, one of “ the Little Flock ”—of 27 all told, including Habakkuk—“ takes ” Browning as a

STERZING-AM-BRENNER

tonic for her soul, and shows that it takes effect. Find two squirrels in the picture! Reward, one day's sub-



scription to the *Daily Mail*.

Dinner was a dismal affair. Ronnell did himself well. She was too full of disappointment about Lois to have room for anything more, and I—— Oh! now for your letter.

I am not "critical and superior about girls." I love them all in a respectable, apostolic way, always did—my mother and Lois made it natural that I should. "Brainless as a college servant and stupid as a Chancellor of the Exchequer" if you like, but I am prepared to be broken off my stem and thrown away if I have not been deeper into affairs of human nature than you have. You forget my post-graduate course at the University of Suburbanity; a curate's eyes and ears are not bricked up. And what is more, you never came across omniscience in a girl, so cannot judge. There was

JOY OF TYROL

enough to go round a Fellows' Common Room. Now can you understand? A mere girl—of fourteen or so—asking a man just going up to the 'Varsity whether his faith was the true one, because hers of course was—no, that sticks with disgusting stickiness!

This town is a gem, a pocket edition of Innsbruck. Turn where you will, a mountain is the topmost thing—handed down unspoiled from the past. Our inn is seven centuries old.

I must turn in. No, one word more. I noticed a large parcel awaiting Miss Ronnell with torn wrappers, which, if my eyes deceived me not, contained—tracts; so we are in for a nice time! Which reminds me that from various little signs Ronnell has been well supplied with such favours; he loses no opportunity of banter. To-day on a good bit of path she said:

“Give the jolly Heaven above,
And the bye-way nigh me,”

ought to be cut on her tombstone, and he at once promised to do it at his own expense if she would join the saints

before he forgot the words: and when we came to the clear green Brenner Lake, which she hailed as a “darling” and wished she had it and a big towel to herself for half an hour, he put on a Stiggins expression and muttered, “Marsalys dear! it's quite nice for Corot to paint that sort of thing, but it's sinful to do it unless you're a goddess.”

A rummy pair.



STERZING-AM-BRENNER

VIII

STERZING.



Sky—an Infinite Forget-me-not.

Fields—dotted with brilliant colours ; dresses of pink, crimson, blue, sparkle along the soft velvet of the grass. A festival, I guess.

Me—well enough, thanks.

A Saint's day programme here would scare a British workman. 4 a.m. up, 4.30 down a goat track to church, 5.30 service, 7 another, and so on, with the luxury of thin beer, gossip, and white bread at intervals till 11, and—home again.

6 p.m. *Just in from a walk.*

We were off to the church when a telegram met me :

"Cannot start to-day. Please persuade Marsalys to stay on with you. LOIS."

It was puzzling. I not easily discovered that Miss Ronnell telegraphed last night suggesting her return. This made me sore. She seemed happier yesterday, but this looked as if she had had been feeling "in the way," which would be beastly with Lois' friend.

There was only one thing to do, say how sorry I was she was missing Lois, that she was due any day, and could not delay much longer ; but that made no impression, so I added that I also should be sorry unless she were bored. Then she brightened up and said, "I will stay ; you are so decent about it."

It has of course been awkward for her, but she behaved with such dignity that if I had never heard her—— Hang it ! I wish I could lay that ghost of sanctimonious piety. Listen :

JOY OF TYROL

Church was full, only standing room near communion rail, at which a row of women knelt, never an eye turned from the altar in whole multitude, motionless as in trance. It made one sensitive to every smallest thing : hair glossy as silk plaited beautifully, wide sturdy backs, hats like black felt clericals trimmed with coloured silk, boots with burnished nails testifying to a hard, unpretentious life.



Little golden tongues of far-off candles spoke dimly through incense fumes, a great orchestra of hearts made silent harmony which would break into

sound when it reached the Eternal Ear. I was gripped. Suddenly I realized that Miss Ronnell was kneeling at the rail between two peasant women, absorbed in worship, and at the moment it seemed the most natural thing in the world, though I have been speculating about it ever since. It may sound like sacrilege, but then for the first time I noticed how graceful she is. The poise of her bent head, the clear skin of her neck and ears—contrasted with those on either side—were extraordinarily interesting ; three women in some ways so alike, vigorous, purposeful, all forgetting everything in prayer ; yet so entirely different.

I also observed that Ronnell had disappeared, and observed straight on till service ended. She is intensely alive ! We followed some of the people into the churchyard—their “ Court of Peace ”—where the men removed their hats, saluting the dead, and the women sprinkled holy water, with an air of making matters more com-

STERZING-AM-BRENNER

fortable for their kinsfolk, and I distinctly heard her whisper to herself "Beautiful," and wondered whether she had remembered her aunts in her devotions. Neither of us spoke, till near the hotel I mentioned her brother's flight, for which she accounted by "Possibly some prejudice"!!

A minute later we found him in front of the inn, on friendly terms with a tall mug, nursing the Strangers' Book of last century, chuckling over its quaint entries.

She asked why he left the church. "Listen," he said: "'Abhor Hotel Brenner at every costs the straws is wet gives rheums to horses and humane feedings is unjustly cooked.' 'This is the best a Duke's courier could do in 1827.'"

After that he took us for a run across history by an indication here and there of people who must have passed the spot where we were standing, and who possibly stayed in the house—German Cæsars on their way to Coronation at Rome, Charles V. strolling up and down Europe, Barbarossa, Frederick the Second, and a host more. He talks when he chooses!

The town was alive with colour, which brought out the charm of the old street—sky as full of swallows as an inverted lake of trout, peasant women with large baskets— Oh! his silly latest was "Female clergy with coloured bees in their bonnets and honey-combs in their hair."

Abendessen.



11 p.m.

While we walked, she stayed behind and sketched.

JOY OF TYROL,

I am sore tempted to steal this gem of the hotel entrance hall because of what happened there.

After dinner the local band delivered itself in the street, some of the men—like fish in an aquarium—



taking deep breaths and blowing the air out with vast solemnity ; a cornet-player sucked half a dozen dimples into his cheeks, and a fat flautist put his chin into puckers. We were standing near each other in the porch, Ronnell strolled off to count the number of chins the flute man produced, and immediately she put into my hand a tract headed "The Scarlet Woman of Rome in the Lake of Fire," and asked with a nervous smile what I should do if I had five thousand copies to distribute in Tyrol. I said I should apply to the agency of lighted matches, as no one here could understand them. "Oh," said she, "I have deposited them all except this in the kitchen stove." I looked her straight in the eyes. She understood, and quietly and clearly said, "I was terribly young once, and, as you know, very terrible."

At that moment her brother returned, said drily, "Seven and a pimple," and was surprised if not annoyed that neither of us smiled.

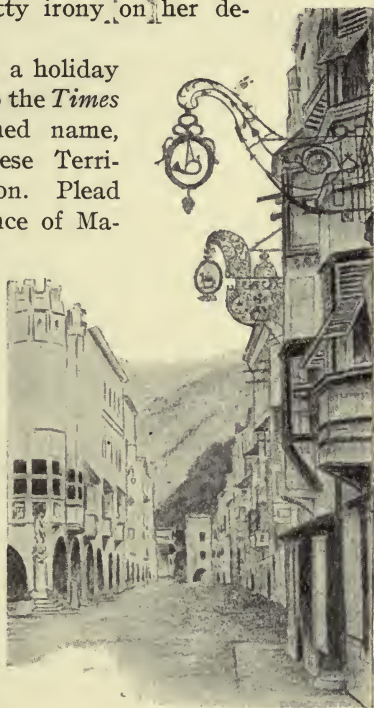
STERZING-AM-BRENNER

This makes all the difference in the world. She did it very simply, and jolly difficult it must have been to do it at all. I wonder where she is now? The tracts are a pretty irony on her devotions this morning!

Now let me set you a holiday task. Write a letter to the *Times* over your distinguished name, advocating the Tyrolese Territorial system of fashion. Plead the educational influence of *Matinées* and Church Services, if, instead of speculating about the price of the hats in front of them, women's minds were set on the native village or county of their wearers. Miss Ronnell's would be plain, with an open safety pin which had once held some squirrel fur.

She is out-of-the-way courageous. Here and now, in the dead of night, I bury the poisonous little religious mosquito which stung me long, long ago. R.I.P. *De mortuis nil nisi bonum.*

I see it now—this was her first chance of putting things right. I begin in fact to see a heap of things; but a large family of moths is having a party round my candle, playing snapdragon with their



JOY OF TYROL

wings, so I—— Yes, I hear you, blessing the moths! Vale.

I ought to have said how full of fine feeling her eyes were.

IX

STERZING-AM-BRENNER.

Miles of fresh air prepare one ill for describing things, and we have seen good ones from on high, which you must realize through homely words.

Thin mist took away sharpness but added feeling. Ronnell went to his extreme "Not bad"; his sister, to whom it was a new thing, was at first silent, then said, "It is an impertinent intrusion coming into their own world like this, but how amazingly different to what they appear from our human levels down below they are."

"Nagshead" was our mountain's name—Ross Kopf. North the billowy Oetzthalers, austere grey in contrast with nearer snow; westward the summit of Ortler under fleecy cloud, pallid and remote, a giant seer in an hour of open vision; and far south triangular white patches, Adamello and Presenella, like tents of twin angels sojourning above our world.

But what words could give the sensation? As well sing into a bottle, and send it home corked up to give the tune! Also, by the ankles of Mercury, I wish you had been in her wake as she climbed—like a chamois—hatless, with her pretty hair fluffing in the air, unconsciously showing delight and surprise, jolly as anything the mountains themselves had to give.

At the club hut a honeymoon pair limped in at lunch

STERZING-AM-BRENNER

The bride made twenty minutes hideous with complaints that her husband had dragged her up regardless of her feet.

Ronnell's face when he saw her shoes became as nearly a gargoyle as flesh and bone could do it ; his repression of a smile is fine acting—but shoes of patent leather with heels like egg-cups on that path ! Sudden nose-bleeding diverted her attention, and covered our retreat to a growl from the Squire of " Foot and nose disease ; ought to be notified."

The way down to Avernus is luxuriously carpeted ; to Sterzing it is single file and rocky ; but if a man have an intelligent person in front and anything which might be worth saying, here is his chance, for through her back no one can simulate amusement whatever she might do with her face.

I gave her some recent examples of the Rector's mnemonic aids, which proved to her taste. I had never realized how much expression the back of a head and two little ears can convey. She greatly enjoyed the old man going two days unshaved to keep in mind a wedding, and his hoisting the coal-scuttle on to his study table at night to remind him to write to the Bishop next morning, and then giving a month's notice to his man for being mad.

The few women I have known at all intimately have—— No, you lemon-ice, you would not understand.

My tongue is still pleasantly hot from a delicious dish of Paprika-huhn, fowl cooked in Hungarian pepper, which came to table red as tomato, a pretty dish to set before three people after a day among the Seraphim.

At a mile and a half above sea-level, what matters it who you are with ?

It matters a good lot.

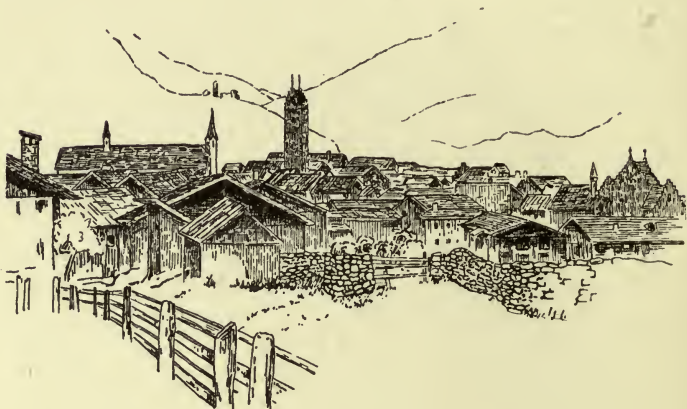
JOY OF TYROL,

With such power of enjoyment as she has! And the
difficult places she must have forged through!

Come Lois or come not, we go on to-morrow.

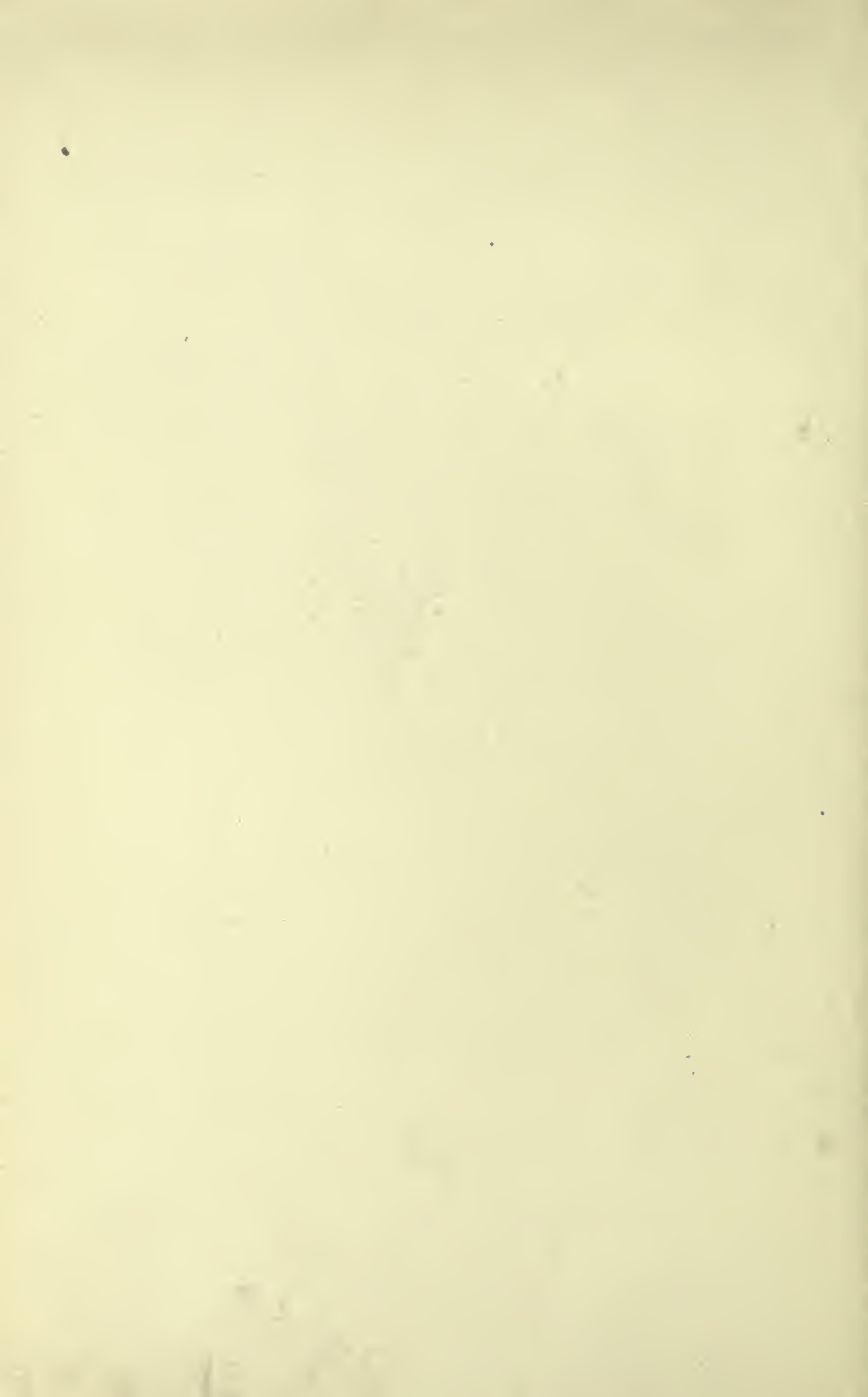
Now may I get down, please?

P.S.—Ronnell is in the way at times.



MUHLBACH-IN-PUSTERTHAL





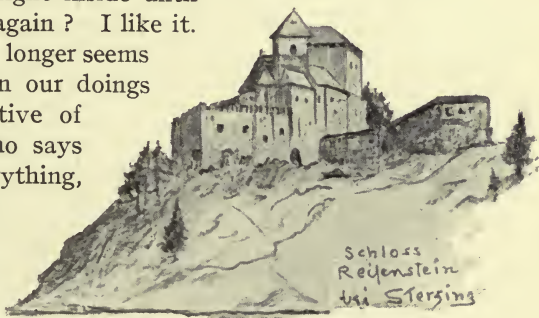
MUHLBACH-IN-PUSTERTHAL

X

SAPIENT BUT LATE-RISING SIR,

How would you like to be greeted at 5.30 a.m. by a girl with eyes like flowers which had shut before sunset and so kept the light inside until the sun was up again? I like it.

Our intimacy no longer seems forced; we plan our doings merrily irrespective of her brother, who says "Ah" to everything, and we leave it to Lois to pick us up where she can.



Schloss
Reifenstein
bei Sterzing

Thisspending of long days with a girl who less than a week ago was a stranger twice removed, that is, both by prejudice and ignorance, is an unlikely story, the chaperon being little more than a pair of ears, but there it is.

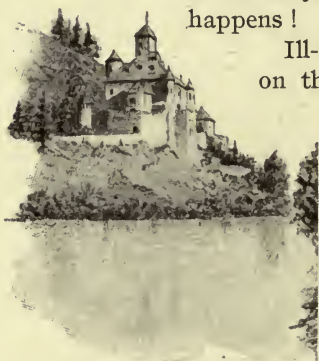
Purple and gold of morning, attentive river turning in frequent twists—like a dog—to make certain we were following, the great motherly mountains above, filled her with such boisterous spirits that, when the sun touched the road, she offered to throw the chaperon fifty yards if he could tell her who called it "shadow-maker, shadow-slayer."

None of his answers entitled him to be thrown. It

JOY OF TYROL

was a ruse to distract him, I think, for to me on her other side she went on: "That thin green Macmillan 'The Death of Ænone' is a bunch of keys to me; every page has opened some new sphere; Akbar's Dream worked revolution in my ideas—'In every temple I see people that see Thee, and in every language I hear spoken, people praise Thee.' Tennyson I—"

But those ears! They let nothing pass, and they control a tongue: "Marsalys dear, not be serious; it destroys everything." This is what happens!



Ill-timed beast, just when she was on the brink. Nothing is sacred to him!

While this castle was being done, there fluttered on to the grass a flock of sky-blue butterflies, tiny machines, but of such multitude as to be important. They sat down, rose, hovered, and settled again like one butterfly over a large area.

From behind the tree in whose shadow we were sitting in silence this silliness broke forth: "Hallo! put me on to brain specialist—double o Central—what?—yes—spiritual mania I'm afraid—what?—oh yes, quoting Tennyson—talking of revolution in her soul—what?—oh! just behave as if we didn't notice anything?—thought that was the wisest line—good-bye—yes, quite—I see."

The beast was lying on his back, blowing clouds out of his gravely grotesque lips.

After lunch she was sitting with gaze set southward as if she saw somebody coming. "Who is it, Sister

MUHLBACH-IN-PUSTERTHAL

Ann ? " he asked. She gazed on. Her silence is good : eyes like windows behind which someone is moving, lips slightly astir, then suddenly out come ideas white-hot which she hammers deftly into sentences.

So it was : " You see that grey tissue ; it is the curtain between us Northerners and Italy. The other side Poetry walks in the open, Imagination basks like a fearless child among the vines, and Beauty sits watching the quarrymen of marble. Blessed are the Romance peoples ! This side the Business corpuscle runs in men's arteries ; they look at everything, even at Almighty God, with calculation across a counter, and keep shop in their very souls." She utterly refused to be interrupted. " Listen to the running waters of the Eisak, where



is it off to ? Italy—because it is wise, and directly it arrives it changes its throaty name to Adige, soft to the tongue. There is still a gate called Beautiful into the Temple of Things-that-matter, but our Puritanic forefathers, with profane lack of manners, slammed it so tight that it jammed, and their less than pious descendants vastly prefer wrangling over the architecture of the building, or the qualifications of those who want to go in, to attempting to swing it open again. Why, I tell you quite illiterate Italians are more sensitive to what is beautiful than a couple of lifetimes would make a prosperous Englishman."

Ronnell murmured sadly into his pouch, " I am an English worm and no man."

" Some damp morning you may turn," she comforted

JOY OF TYROL

him. Then he whistled for the waitress, put a crown into her hand, and asked his sister to explain that it was an extra tip "for the bother she would have—wiping up the untidy ideas spilt about during the last few minutes!"

Late in the afternoon we came to the zone of walnut-trees, with vineyards in sight, and while the sun was setting large raindrops fell from scattered clouds.

A wide hospitable valley with woods full of music. As we turned eastward into it, she, swinging along with upturned face, smiling as the rain splashed her brow, was so evidently pleased about something that I offered ten hellers for her thoughts.

"I was only thinking," she said, "that there are times when the Supreme Hand sprinkles holy water on His creatures as if He were an ordinary parish priest."

This is the unexpected.

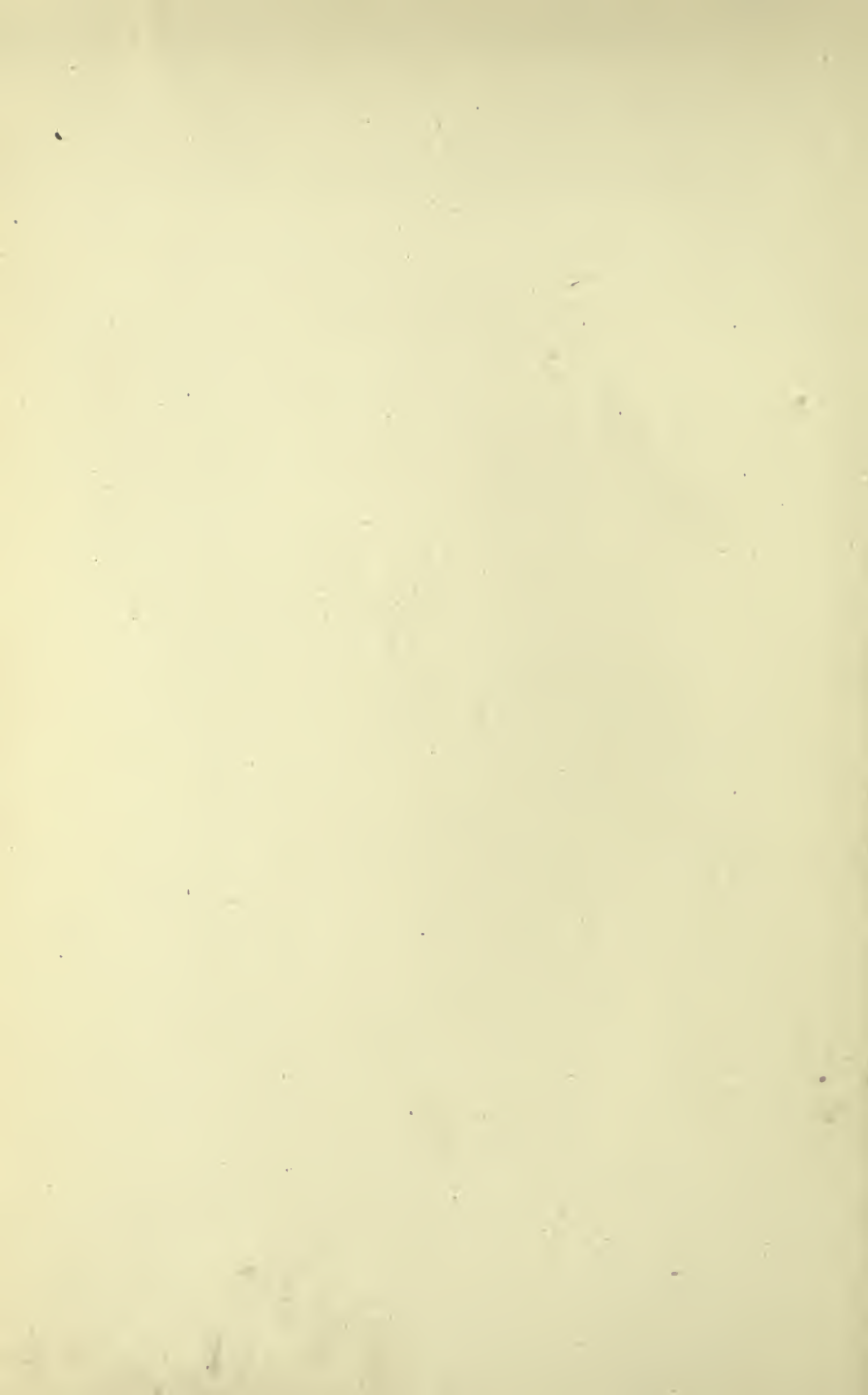
Dearest of men, there be times when Faith asks house-room, and a man opens his fairest chamber, wherein Faith sups with him like a brother: and times when the giant Love-of-the-hills steals into that same chamber, and he flings the casement open and looks out and calls them Father and Mother: but there be also times when into his fairest—— I mean when if a man should be compelled to write out the recipe for a good wholesome day, he would do it thus: Take twenty or thirty miles of superior Alpine land, soak it all day in sunshine, mix thoroughly with a large piece of the best kind of fresh human nature, add a dozen drops of rain, and sprinkle the whole with dry Ronnell.

Og, Gog, and Magog! the thing I meant to write about when I began was a seventeenth-century bureau I have been writing on, and now I am too sleepy. But two lines more and I am done.

I can get no opportunity of being alone with her; her hands are more beautiful than any I have seen.

BRUNECK-IN-PUSTERTHAL





BRUNECK-IN-PUSTERTHAL

XI

EIGHTEEN such jolly miles as one could hug for being as they were! Six of gorge and gurgling river, twelve of wide valley brilliant—with hue of maize and flax and poppies—as a woman's mind.

The garrison band played so well while we dined, it seemed frivolous to eat—such waves of feeling were curling in from the past on to the shore of our beautiful day.

Great big things were about—stars settling into their places, mountains silhouetted against sky of primroses among which a thin young moon was lingering, air at the service of whomsoever should command.

In the Prelude to *Rienzi*, Wagner came back from the grave and cast his ideas forth, so that we might be caught into his own emotions. It was the most personal appeal I ever heard made through music.

Ronnell has ears enough, but no "ear." He annoyed his sister by saying three times over "Your pudding is feeling neglected," and came in for her mind on Wagner when the band stopped. She told him he was the Least Common Denominator of human feeling, gathered into himself the entire experience of life, was like a plant fed on air, sunbeams, dew, and darkness, which produced flowers the creatures of Heaven and Earth, clouds and winds; put him with Abraham, Isaiah, Dante—all the rare men with a whole soul who can speak it whole, and so forth.

JOY OF TYROL

It seems to me that to be alone with her and get her to talk freely would probably be as delightful an experience as one could have ; you see how she draws, she responds to music like Echo, and has a mind—hang it ! a fowl with a crank for early rising is cackling so persistently I can hardly write consecutively, and it's too warm to close my windows—has, I think I was going to say, a sparkling mind.

Dinner was jolly. Besides ourselves we fed several dogs, in particular a Dachshund of exceeding length and persuasive power, which wheedling Ananias explained that he was originally designed by an All-wise

Providence as an exceptionally large centipede—so Miss Ronnell declared—but in the absence of intervening feet, at the last moment forgotten, had contracted a drooping habit about his saddle by reason of which he required frequent building up.

As he departed it struck one that an extra pair of legs at his middle would have added comfort after such a meal as he had cadged.



Also a Dalmatian pedlar paid us a visit, whose appearance turned the lady's head. As if reciting a Psalm she said : "The East ! Contrast its dignity with the hurly-burly of the West. Less than sixty hellers a day it spendeth on the flesh, yet beareth itself as a Prince. Be there sunshine enough it standeth content therein, and is——"

"Is the least common denominator of human dirt and laziness," the Beast put in like an antiphone, and while I was dealing with him my cigarette case was emptied into the Oriental's bony palm. I don't think I told you what lovely hands she has, so full of expression that— Oh, that hen ! why was it not

BRUNECK-IN-PUSTERTHAL.

poached in extremest youth ? And then the Mystical East gazed into the eyes of the inscrutable West, during which time this portrait was outlined.

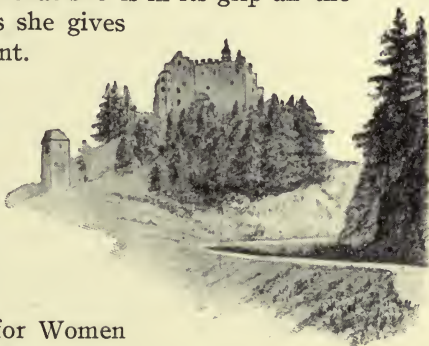
Inscrutable, yes ! We are on frankly amicable terms, yet I feel I know her hardly at all. What she says has always a clean edge, half-humorous, half-serious, as if fencing against her brother's cynical banter ; but she has the air of one who believes something so absolutely and feels it so profoundly that she is in its grip all the time, and of what this is she gives not the shadow of a hint.

The natural vigour of her mind, along with this conviction which I cannot but think possesses her, gives her face a certain beautiful art of interpretation——
That bird is maddening ! it must be Votes for Women she wants. I must to bed.

This Bishop's Castle is just outside the town, and I cannot understand how, out of such cramped surroundings, such large sense has been born. I should have said much more but that I wrote first to Lois, demanding serious information about her.

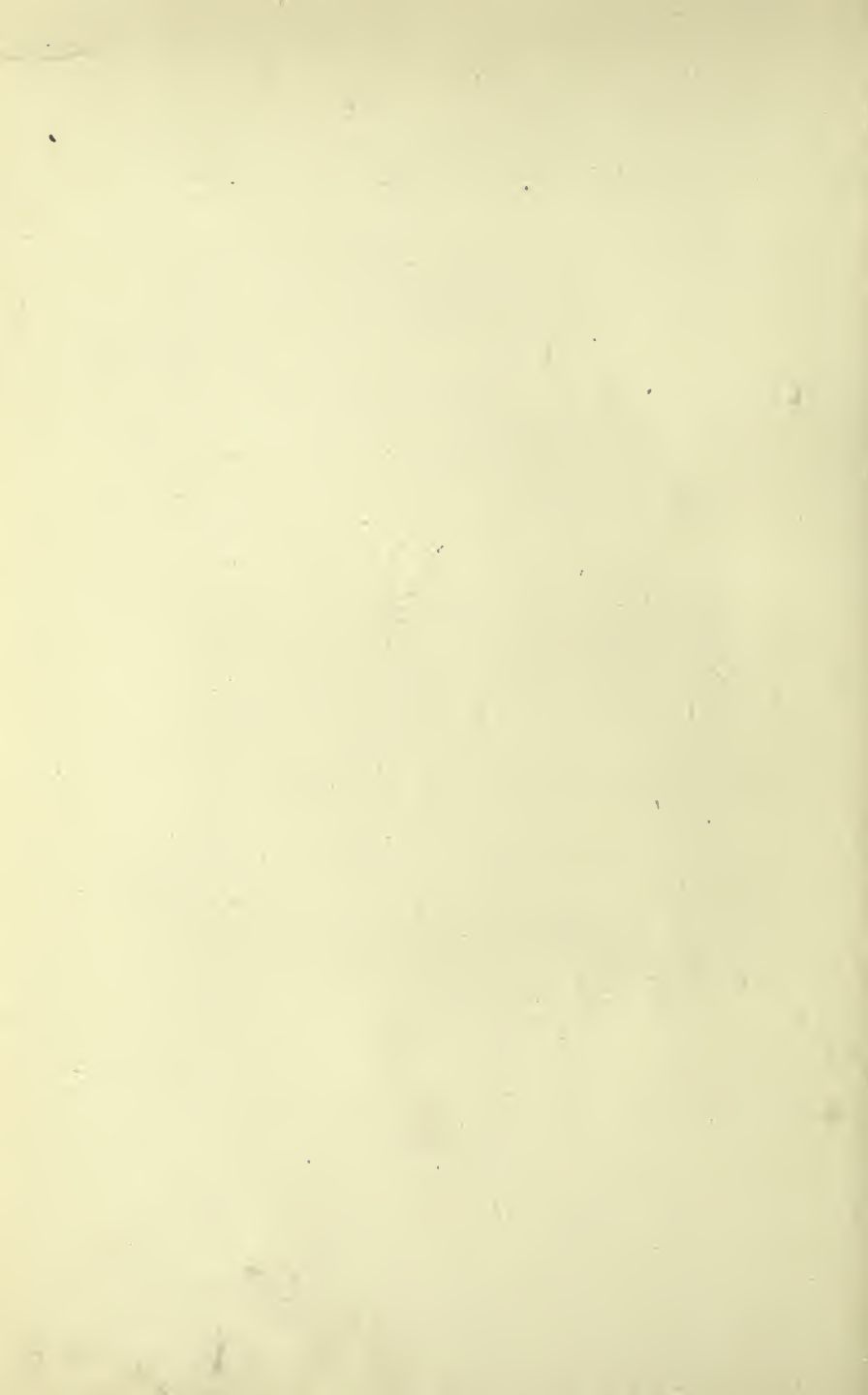
With never a minute alone it is not possible to discover—— That fiendish cackle ! Those ears like a telephone are, oh——

Bed with the sheets over my ears is the only refuge.



TOBLACH-IN-PUSTERTHAL





TOBLACH-IN-PUSTERTHAL

XII



A STRIKING characteristic of the road here is the peasants' "Grüss Gott," a greeting in God's name which comes warm from their hearts. Consciousness of the Divine Presence seems part of whatever they do; we often meet

them saying prayers aloud as they walk, rosary in hand. Their greetings are well worth having—righteous, honest, and sober folk.

The day has been manifold. A gross of eyes, score of noses, two dozen ears, one could have kept employed. There were miles over which scent of mown grass and of trees basking in the heat made fragrance fit for the gods, rocks as richly clad in purple and crimson and all other fineries as the Tabernacle of old. There were—I know not what there was not!

At lunch a most communicative creature served us, and we suffered her gladly. Into the scanty plot of twenty minutes she planted more information about young men and maidens, cows and old women, crops, fires, funerals, and priests, than I thought humanly possible till she did it.

She slowed down on a High Mass of last Easter, for which she lacked adjectives, and stood clutching the air as if from it to catch adequate words; made the sign of the Cross on her breast and stopped, out of

JOY OF TYROL

breath, having probably broken all records of conversational sprinting.

I asked how she occupied herself during winter. She explained that the spinning had to be done.

"Quite so, and what else?"

She rumbled her eyebrows and with refreshed intelligence said, "You must understand there is all the spinning of the summer's flax to be done."

It sounded idyllic—"Shpeen," full of the fireside peace of winter evenings; but I, too curious to leave those white mysterious months alone—for they only spin enough for immediate needs, and strong linen wears like leather—made a third essay: "Yes, you spin flax for your linen, which is so fine in Tyrol; but snow lies more than half the year, during which you do nothing out of doors. With what else do you fill up?"

Not to be beaten, she gathered herself up: "Mein Gott! I have not told you all there is to be done in those winter months"; rubbed her brow with her knuckles, and smothered me with "Of course! there is already all the spinning to be done."

No interfering Boards of Education ever meddled with her individuality. She stood out at twelve-twenty of the clock this day a superb example of Nature's triumph over such futile influences as culture and intellect, whatever they may be.

When Miss Ronnell told her about England, the sea, our monster battleships, her eyes opened wider and wider, till at the explanation of what the ships were for, she gasped "Gracious lady, stop! Never have I heard of such horrible things—to live in the sea on a large rock, with only a covering of soil! Maria!"

When I asked for the bill she pulled a pencil out of her hair, and bent over her paper for such a long time that I leaned across with the object of helping, on

TOBLACH-IN-PUSTERTHAL

which she looked up—so suddenly that her forehead bumped mine—and with tears in her eyes said, “How happy you must be in Tyrol, where there is no thirsty sea trying to swallow you.”

Ronnell made her his text for a dissertation on the training of the labouring classes, which came out in staccato sentences, at long intervals, for two or three miles.

Later on—near Welsberg—the sky grew sullen and a storm came up which soon filled the entire valley. A professional Storm—no whit dilettante or hesitating—it started on a high key, dropping mischievous globules of rain here and there, then rumbled down to the bass and flung cats, dogs, and brickbats, and after a pause for girding its loins it pulled out every stop, and with a toss of the head crashed on to the keys and let loose the whole gamut. I never heard or imagined anything like it. It screamed, groaned, creaked, prayed, and cursed, till every mountain within reach howled back and made the welkin solid with shrieks and booms of desolating noise. You could feel it. It hit you between the eyes. You walked among it as through undergrowth with shrinking feet. That was not all. The wind took part, whistling among rocks and trees with devilish carelessness, and whipping up the white dust from the roads in such neatly held strips that it seemed to be flinging the roads themselves about, flicking them in the air like immense lengths of ribbon shaken high up against the dark bewildered sky. Last of all the lightning, which had been practising, got to work in style. It played for a time like yellow spaniels after rats, darting with incredible speed about the fields, then rising to wilder spirits tossed immense wriggling serpents about and flung fire in all directions. Everything was sepia except itself; clouds dropped to within a

JOY OF TYROL,

stone's throw, out of which came demons of fire—the very cottages seemed to be dodging the fangs as they came biting down.

The inevitable Ronnellism came at the most inappropriate moment of course—when the storm was on its top gear—in the silly question, “ Marsalys dear, isn't there a chap called Brock who does this sort of thing rather well ? ”

He describes it as a “ large size ” in storms ; it was—sound, wind, and flame unlimited. The passion of a baby, the calculated anger of a man, and the fury of the hounds of Hell were in it ; yet, after its hour had passed, as if to show what it might have done if it had been in earnest, it shot a single needle of flame into a shed of dry hay, and, but for the drenched ground, ten minutes after it had disappeared the only sign it left behind was a thin pinnacle of grey smoke quivering up from the burning chalet.

What did she think ? She never spoke, just stood in the pelt of it, and drank in each sound and flash like a child vastly enjoying itself ; but as we passed some women, wet as ourselves, kneeling in the mud before a Crucifix, she quoted Ruskin's aphorism : “ Only among the labouring peasantry the grace of a pure Catholicism, and the patient simplicities of the Puritan, maintain their imaginative dignity or assert their practical use.”

Her mind is so apt that her secretiveness maddens one.

Our arrival was made awkward by uncertainty about rooms. I went first to the Post Office, and on coming to the inn heard voices of women from a window on the third floor, one arguing impossibility, one—*hers*—pleading possibility.

Rushing upstairs, I charged into a daughter of the house, who raised hands and eyebrows on recognizing

TOBLACH-IN-PUSTERTHAL

me, and hurried back to her mother with a shout, "Mein Gott! it is the Herr Englander of the white mouth; this of course is his bride, she is so beautiful."

I felt as miserably helpless as a trussed fowl while those two women gazed at her in rapt admiration, and, though I got out of it with little grace, we all got rooms with the best view.

To the Tyrolese innkeeper five years is as one day. They never forget you. A callow undergraduate drops in for a night, time flies, what's that to them? I shave my upper lip—and, here we are.

Why no letter from you?

Why is Ronnell?

Why doesn't he catch mumps, and leave us free to get to know each other?

XIII

TOBLACH.

"Wise men lie under trees and ponder."

The soil having no memory of yesterday I have been



a wise man, Ronnell has invented lies about the Italians, she has made this picture.

JOY OF TYROL

What have I? Herself chiefly, and, at the risk of throwing pearls before dons, her merry tip-tilted nose and very tell-tale mouth.

Who was it said God makes our eyes, chins, and noses, but lets us make our own mouths? If it be true I ought to clear out; it is a mouth divinely made, and I be shocking company for a goddess; her rounded chin, however, is human, and her dimples—yes, the dimples, I think, justify me in staying.

She talked of places down the road to Italy, the entrance to which she was sketching: "Verona clasped by grey old Adige—Ravenna dreaming among mosaics and mosquitoes—Venice the only Venus in her bath—Torcello God's pet sea-gull."

She has that rare possession, a mind—not brains (women probably beat us there), but a mind. She moves easily among her facts, uses them like a trained craftsman, prettily, unexpectedly.

As I write I see her a mile below, turning in to the hotel, and confess with trepidation—for it is a sign of advancing years—that this has been the most delightful morning I ever spent.

She draws out a better self than one suspected of existing, rouses one's best, calls up the reserves, because she is so full of vitality herself; her versatility is in fact rather dazzling to a slow person like me.

I wish I could convey something of the sensations which are in me, but I know your limitations, and will only say that had you watched this picture in the making you would frame it in gold.

Flies made these blots.

I love pine-trees, love lying among their needles, like a kitten in their workbasket, looking at the ceiling they paint of deep blue shot with fine network of green lines—

Beelzebub!

TOBLACH-IN-PUSTERTHAL,

After Dinner.

The approaching advent of Lois raises our spirits.

The flies which drove me in, started our chatter at lunch, and brought from the lady her conviction that "all life is sacred, even that of flies." "Taxis?" from Ronnell annoyed her, and brought out a fuller declaration that "all Creation, from protoplasm to Man, is slowly but surely moving onwards, homeward bound to something infinitely great, the road uphill for the whole crowd, the religions and philosophies of men being finger-posts and sometimes milestones."

A large and easy way of arranging matters, but she says such things in the tone of one who has not a fibre of doubt about them. Ronnell, for some reason, objects to her serious moods. He listened till she came to the end, and said, "Marsalys, is that not what Holy Scripture calls the unpardonable synthesis?"

Yesterday's electric performances pulled my nerves about so much that I tried for a nap after lunch, and I could have slept like a baby but for a cuckoo clock on the landing. What infernal devices they be!

You lie down on the edge of sleep, begin to feel the delicious sensation of dropping swiftly into the abyss—suddenly something coughs out "Cuck-oo." Once, it's forgivable, brings thoughts of spring and angels; then, just as one feels the soft pressure coming on one's eyelids again, "Cuck-oo" breaks in twice, and away go your angels, and you get up wondering what curse could be adequate for a bird whose call can be mimicked and whether you have sufficient sense of justice to invent one. As well have dog clocks that bark, and pig clocks that grunt. If I had not been disturbed my headache would have lifted.

My pen grows wobbly.

JOY OF TYROL,

This castle was once the Imperial Maximilian's; now some labourers inhabit it—by which token the villagers are breaking into music down in their Gast-zimmer.



I'm half asleep, but let who will be merry—Yodel falsetto rhymes and call them a sweet song. So take and tear to pieces, crumple, burn, and bury this sleepy letter which I've sat at far too long. Yes, she is the sort of girl to make a chum of, very like Lois. I am not vexed

with Lois now, but I shall let her have it hot when she arrives all the same.

XIV

TOBLACH-IN-PUSTERTHAL.

Because we dally for Lois, you have secured a jolly drawing and I an afternoon alone with her Marsalys.

Eight miles down the Cortina road you come on this wonderful Cristallo looking into the lake.

Hunger drove us to Schluderbach for lunch, where the kind Fates provided a polyglot botanist who carried Ronnell off with him to look for specimens—an intelligent pursuit which has my heartiest approval.

Before settling down again she produced a thin volume, Browning's "Fifine at the Fair," and asked me to read while she sketched. I did as I was told, right through from start to finish—"Love is all and Death is nought."

Now listen to me. If I gave you a choice of all possible poems a girl of nice feeling and serious mind might ask a man to read to her, you would never put "Fifine" among them—which is the whole point. She is not "a girl of nice feeling and serious mind." That

TOBLACH-IN-PUSTERthal

is a category, and you cannot get her into any category. She is by herself—a Once.

I asked what she made of it. She ran over the whole scale like a pianist, contrasted it with "Paracelsus," quoted first from one, then from the other; and if her memory is remarkable her power of analysis seems to me much more so.

Some day I must give you her theory, but I wish



you had seen her as she talked, her easy gait, uncovered head, and face a little upturned as if in communication with the sky.

On the way back we had tea, expecting her brother—a pleasant *tête-à-tête*, she hovering still like a bee round "Fifine," reluctant to leave it till she had its last drop of nectar, and, like a bee, doing it by instinct.

Ronnell not turning up, her mood was so companionable that on the providential hint of a squirrel which crossed our path, I asked if she knew me enough to

JOY OF TYROL

say why and how she had changed her views so completely. Well enough! I might have been her own mother. I was sorry I had asked, when she began by confessing fear that she had "finally sickened Arnold of everything serious by her fretful letters about his little soul while he was at school."

With the sensitiveness of a big nature and the gentlest of touches, she talked of her aunts. But for her dimples I should never have suspected how much she feels the humour of their lives; it was positively noble the way she spoke of their interest in pathetically silly theories, cold disapproval of all amusements, dogged earnestness about certain prophetic views, and pride of ignorance concerning any other conception of things than their own. Their Heaven is a little party speaking the same jargon about the Scarlet Woman, the number 666 and the Roman Church, an eclectic Paradise comprising themselves, Abraham, Ezekiel, and, possibly, Micah, together with such bucolics as attend their Mission and there sample what is to come, in the shape of hymns written by the ladies themselves, particular preaching all the year round, and hot soup during the colder weather.

"I swallowed it all," she said gravely, "I suppose because I am rather a serious person, and these were the only ideas I had ever heard about Heaven and that sort of thing, and I think I believed it till I began trying to get the perspective of life. Then it was impossible to fit in these ideas with the dignity and grandeur of the stars, the seasons, the sunrise; the unpleasant Heaven of cranks was not worth having, led on to nothing; the very thought of it pinched mind, heart, and spirit, put the Creator into the position of impotent importance of the Chairman of a Parish Council, and reduced the Father of the Universe to a capricious official."

TOBIACH-IN-PUSTERTHAL.

Her wits are of steel, they cut down to the core, yet she has the frankness of a child. I am writing against time and the arrival of Lois, so give only a rough idea, but it was an apocalyptic walk, with gaunt, grey-green sleepy mountains above us tufted with shining snow.

I wonder whether you—— I mean, these ten days I have been drawn by her personality, have felt curious about the disappearance of the Miss of the Mission and the coming of this other being. Conditions have of course been such that my focus has adjusted itself to the person nearest at hand, but here I discover the charm of dead earnestness, with none of the assertiveness which often spoils those who have it. For example, telling me about the gradual coming of completely new ideals, she gave as the instruments of her emancipation—Lois, Tennyson, Jock, Browning, Bishop Westcott, and Northampton Jane; and, after explaining that Jock was a terrier who died on her lap with the light of immortality in his eyes, and Northampton Jane a mare who saved her from drowning, she handed me a little silver box which she called her “divining crystal” in which she had found the world’s fate and her own.

In it were the Gospel and First Epistle of St. John.

You probably are too profound to get the flavour of these things—that is the curse of great learning, it makes people so miserably intelligent that they miss the human and really interesting things of life—but if you are getting it, here’s the whole thing: Fifteen years ago a motherless little darling, with grey-green eyes and brown hair, was handed over to a pair of harpies who ran a religious smithy for the purpose of binding what souls they could lay hold of in bands of iron, to whom she in particular seemed veritably a godsend. They smacked their unctuous lips in gratitude to God for her as a brand plucked from the burning, soaked her little

JOY OF TYROL

soul in texts, then dropped a narrow red-hot band of what they called The Truth round it and blew till it cooled.

What wonder if she did talk about it !

But she burst it as only a muscular heart could do, and has not a splinter of it left in any part of her—a thundering good sort, full of life to the brim, Roman Catholic or whatever she chooses to be.

If her aunts heard her I imagine they would curl up and die like a couple of bacilli in pure air.

She was approaching her present convictions, and I was prepared for something specially interesting, when Ronnell overtook us driving a pair-horse cab, cracking the whip in the reverberating style of the drivers here, the coachman inside, lounging back smoking !

For an English magistrate——

Halloo ! the jingle of the hotel equipage and Lois the postponer.

10.30 p.m.

I stood with a kiss ready and arms open, but by the ringlets of my great-grandmother the only person to alight was Miss Ronnell with a telegram from the *poste restante* in her hand.

Ronnell says Lois has invented a new disease, Procrastinitis, and is trying it on herself before she allots it to the public. Her wire is idiotic enough to be officially certified.

"All meet at Cortina not possible leave Munich to-day really ill Cortina then understand. LOIS."



TOBLACH-IN-PUSTERTHAL

We made merry over it at supper, some variations being, "Munich not up to the mark to-day, but Lois will drag it down to Cortina later, and we are to make Cortina understand the wisdom of her action"—"Can't all meet at Cortina, Lois has left Munich because the town is sick, Cortina will see what she means because they call each other by their Christian names." Miss Ronnell's sole contribution was horribly pertinent: "Why does she put in the word 'all'?"

Heaven send it does not mean—— But "all"? She knows we have not separated—all!

Angels and Ministers of Grace, is this her Ladyship I see before me? No, I remember she always says Carlsbad spoils her for the rest of Austria, so that's all right.

One word more: that picture of the smithy is entirely my own conjecture of her earlier experiences.

It has been a dainty day, and after a glance at your letter I will lay me down.

Peace to thy brains.

Oh, most ignorant of men, it stirs all my pity to see you sink so deep in the quicksands of Philosophy, but if you insist on drowning don't blame me.

I thought you knew me better than that! As if mere propinquity had anything in the world to do with what you call "falling in love."

Perhaps when you read what I have already written about to-day you will understand our relations clearly; you seem to forget what I have told you often about my abhorrence of the sickness of sentiment.

I am against your letter, with its clever innuendoes; it's beastly to have to write about her. Her room is next mine. If she's awake she may hear my pen scratching.

JOY OF TYROL

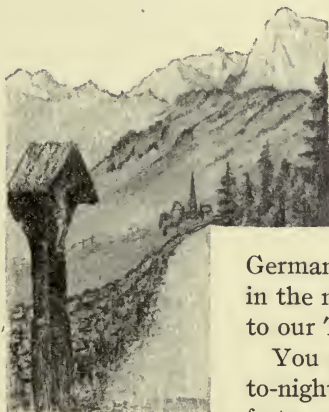
I like her and admire her, and if she happened to be a man it would be exactly the same to me, so don't ever wake me up again with such drivel, or you sha'n't have a detail more—just you leave Marsalys Ronnell among her mountains, and let me sleep.

MONTE CROCE



MONTE CROCE

XV



CATS on a wall here sit we.

Twelve yards to the South, dark-skinned custom officials with reverberating voices, long moustachios, skittles—Italy.

Same to the North, German-speaking cows munching in the meadows which slope down to our Tyrolese Sextenthal.

You are something of a nuisance to-night; your fatuous letter still frets me. It is difficult to forgive—but I will try.

Yesterday Miss Ronnell found, instead of her own, a pair of German elastic-sided boots at her door. The chambermaid laughed at the mistake, and later, when she failed to trace them, cried over it. This morning, just before we started, she turned up with red eyelids, a glowing smile, and the boots, declaring that she knew they would be discovered as she had spent the night in prayer to S. Anthony, whose business in life is to find things. Ronnell gave the girl a gulden, and told his sister to explain that he wanted her to wish His Usefulness many happy returns of the day, and say

JOY OF TYROL

that if he were ever out of a job he would use his influence for him at Scotland Yard.

But about this ridge. After a wash we went out and lay upon some fresh-mown grass. The Tyrol mountains were soft grey wool; the Italian, gold with patches of vermillion in glaring contrast, gold from the setting sun, vermillion either from clay or sand in places. A little vigil, full of silences, lights, colours. Shadow, the careful old Nurse of the world, leaned down and covered up one place after another, making it comfortable for the night; the sun was dropping slowly down behind a wall of garnet, and up through the fragrant air came broken music of an Ave Maria a tiny girl was singing as she worked among her hay, which by the time it reached us but was a moth of sound.

We had the two local dogs to dinner.

After the toast of "Our Guests" had been sustained, Miss Ronnell played the game of psychological vet. She petted, palpated, advised, and at the close of her examination pronounced them "English." Ronnell screamed "What?"

She screamed back, "Behave, lick, gobble like it, understand our tongue, speak it to each other, and, what's more, only live here because of our diabolic quarantine regulations and the jerky Channel," and added, "In proof of which, observe them, the Italian unlike any recognized species, like a full-sized black bat with front legs where the wings ought to be, and the Austrian everything the word 'mongrel' gathers under its wings, yet both are dogs and dears, and have followed every word. Q. E. D."

Her point was made. They were both blinking intelligently into her eyes.

Ronnell could not keep back "dognosis," and when with an idiotic grimace he turned to dodge a threatened

MONTE CROCE

pepper-pot, she declared herself far too economical to kill him out here, as, scientifically stuffed in London, he would some day be a priceless addition to the Natural History Museum. They are becoming more amicable, you see.

We rise with the early worms, so I got my bill at dinner. It is a simple inn, nevertheless perfect. Bath-rooms and salons it hath not, but a portable table, paralytic in the legs, it hath, whereof these jerky writings do testify, for upon it I am inscribing these presents by light shed from the porch on to the road, where beneath a night full of stars I am. Yes, there is no inn, never was, or will be, more fitted to shelter two very friendly—I mean three ill-assorted tramps. Like it?

Three bedrooms	..	..	..	3/9
Three dinners (!)	..	..	..	5/5
To-morrow's breakfasts	..	..	..	1/9
Wine for flask	..	..	..	-2 $\frac{4}{10}$

Half a sovereign for our entire upkeep is not prodigal.

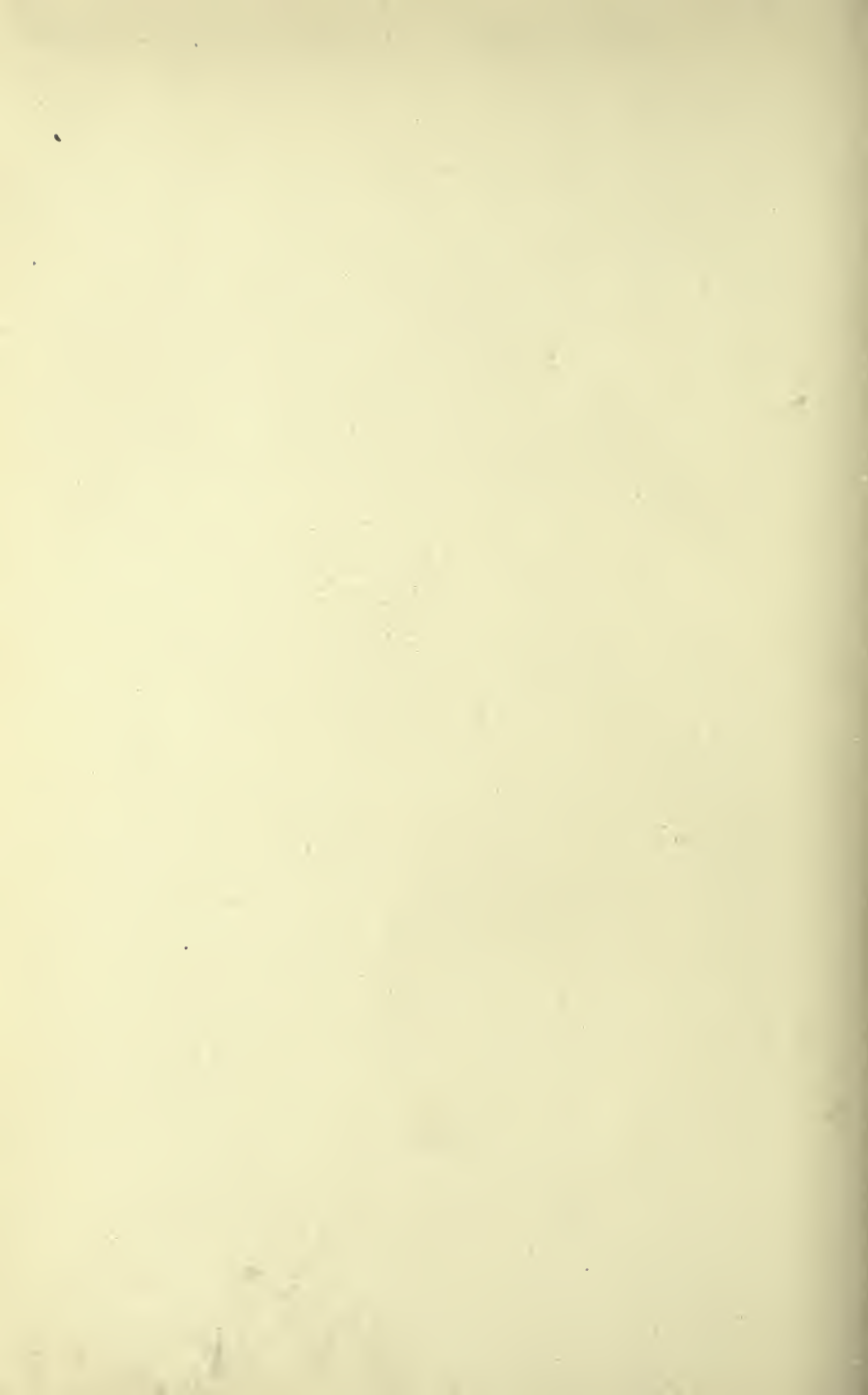
The air blows cold. Good night.

“To-morrow to fresh woods and pastures new.”

Milton seems trite to-night. Why? Because he never sat on the tiles as we are doing.

In my pocket is her “Fifine,” which I am going to look through again to see if her theory fits. At Sexten during lunch we got on to the Great Masters, and as much from what she left unsaid as from what she said, I see that art—No, I’m hanged if I tell you about her. I will tell you this about Ronnell: he is very like a toy which only squeaks when you pinch it. She told him to-night he was playing it too low down on his biographers, as they could not make a decent volume out of monosyllables.

She really—— No.



SAN STEFANO DI CADORE



SAN STEFANO DI CADORE

XVI

HER first word was "Italy," and the excitement this land sets up in imaginative people has been peeping out in a hundred delightful ways since 4.30 a.m., at which hour we showed ourselves in upon the beatific day before it was prepared for visitors, in spite of which intrusion it was uncommon kind through all the sunny serpentine miles.

Seven years ago I was here with O'Brian, and have ever since suspected my memory of exaggeration. Not a bit! She calls the whole thing "absolute"—so it must be.

Dark when we started, faintest shimmer of grey to the East, soon, with incredible speed, the Horses of Dawn leaped the passes and snorted light abroad.

We had it all to ourselves. Except in the villages we saw never a creature larger than a lizard. Cows we saw, and goats of course, but never man, woman, or child.

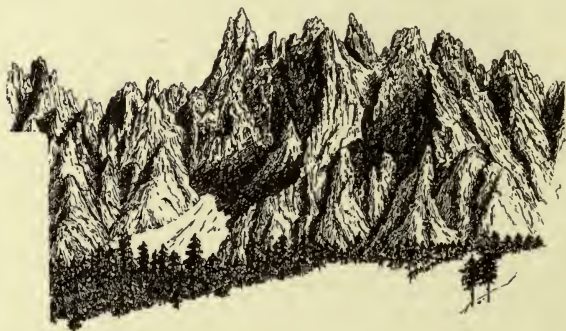
The sky gave new meaning to the phrase "God's own profound"; it was—at dawn—as if the sun drew a curved blue ceiling down from the Night and left it between us and the darkness.

There was a vivid sense of movement when the light touched the jagged rocks; they seemed to stretch themselves like waves cresting upwards; and later, whenever out of a shady bit of path we came on them

JOY OF TYROL

afresh, their forms were weirdly melodramatic. But the sketch will show you : look first at the trees, slowly up to the glacier, and last at the summits.

Good portraiture this, finished since dinner from outlines done under difficulties, the result of her thumb having been twisted in a wrestle with her window in the night, and the cause of an amusing incident on the road, to wit, the sudden descent of her plaits of brown hair. She tried to make clear to us mere men that to have done it at all with a maimed hand and no looking-



glass was a big achievement, explaining, while she stood attempting it a second time, what slippery stuff long hair is, and how unreliable a creature the common hair-pin. When it refused to stay up, Ronnell offered to express her thoughts in forcible English, and she forthwith turned him on to the job ; but, his idea being to tie it into a bundle like a cart-horse's tail, lacking either straw or string, he gave it up ; so—though it seemed rather like cheek to offer—as my fingers are not all thumbs as his are, I risked it, and she said at once, “ Please do, or I shall have to go the rest of the day like a Kelpie.”

SAN STEFANO DI CADORE

I played the coiffeur to perfection, and the cerulean sky looked on and blessed me; those smooth plaits held loyal till we sailed in here for lunch.

Why "sailed" I don't know, unless that I was so wet! By the time we reached it the valley was a cauldron of boiling air, and the coolness of the inn very grateful; the last hour even our light rucksacks pulled like lead.

At San Candido—the village above this—I was reminded as I came through that O'Brian and I had had dealings with it, which I recalled to the amusement of Miss Ronnell, and what is good enough for her is good enough for you, dear man, so listen.

We were footing it from Venetia to Toblach, and came into San Stefano so hot and dusty that we would there have stayed, but for the enticement of the cooler air of San Candido—2,000 feet higher—only three miles ahead, at which place Baedeker promised a fine view and gave a star to the inn. So we jaded youths administered such courage to our hearts as a cup of black coffee combined with a liqueur can give, and had achieved the first two miles of the way, which were level as a lawn, when!—at the first turn of the valley we looked up and beheld, on the top of a rude bastion of rock, San Candido leering down at us, and the only way thither—a silly zigzag not fit for a respectable goat!

Night was falling, thirty scorching miles were telling on our humour, pangs of emptiness demanding our attention, and to crown our day's work stood those hundreds of feet of rough-cast wall between us and dinner and bed. Hot, wet, and cross we were before we saw the gilded letters ALBERGO ALLE GRAZIE informing the world that here was a place of entertainment for man and beast, and I told O'Brian that he being what he was the needs of both of us would be met. He began

JOY OF TYROL

by calling it the Champion of Rotten Places, and I only cooled him down with large promises. I told him Baedeker never lied, and that if he would be good he should have tomato-spagetti to build afresh his ligaments, the fattest of fat fowls to make new muscle, the lightest of cheese omelettes to ensure eupepsia, and a flask of Chianti to wash it down withal—for the names of these things I knew, and could order them with confidence. I also promised that before he slept he should be filled with joy and warm food, and that that night should sit in his memory for ever with a smile upon it.

We came to an imposing double door, and I pulled the bell—genteelly, as one who calls upon Mrs. Jones of Upper Tooting—but nothing happened. I pulled again with emphasis—as for the local plumber in a sudden thaw—but nothing happened.

It was now quite dark, we were shivering, O'Brian was dropping into needlessly profane expression of his feelings, so I pulled that bell a third time, as in these parts one would ring for the priest when in need of extreme unction for one's rich and childless uncle, and the brass knob came away in my hand, and I dragged the wire across the road to the edge of the precipice—but nothing happened.

He suggested forcing the door ; we did, and even then only found ourselves in a large vestibule of pitchy darkness from which I shouted, in such round Italian as I had, to any one who might chance to hear, while he fumbled for matches, which, when he found them, he began immediately committing to the flames of Gehenna because they would not strike on his damp trousers. He then exhorted me to scream "for all I was worth," which I did with careless disregard of the limits of my patrimony—but nothing happened.

To cut the story short, after striking dozens of wax

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matches on the walls, after burning the tips of most of our fingers, and after groping like felons about the stairs and corridors of that starred hotel, we at last heard distant fizzlings and the chink of pans, and by aid of ears and noses discovered the Padrona in their midst.

"Food-wine-cheese-and-beds-for-two," I shouted in one word, and with my hat performed a salutation in the manner of high diplomacy, but the toothless old fool gobbled back such a rigmarole of patois, with neither consonant nor stop of any kind, that I knew there was no avenue of communication open with her, so I left O'Brian to look about for what food he could find, seized a candle, and went in search of some one whom I might compel to understand our plight.

Half-way up a curling staircase it occurred to me that so near the frontier German might work, so I howled "Fräulein" into the unknown, and like an echo the word "Gleich" came to my hungering soul from above, quickly followed by a buxom girl.

"What food could we have?"

"Whatever food the gentlemen pleased to order."

It promised well, and quite in line with what I had told O'Brian. I licked my parched lips and forgot my clamminess, but the result! It was not magnificent, nevertheless it was war—with our teeth—when we sat down against it.

Slowly the truth emerged that it was long since they had seen a fowl, flies had walked away with their macaroni, the shops were shut for the night, and their cheese was in its dotage. We came prepared to eat and pay for a table-d'hôte dinner for six persons, but with a wave of that silly girl's hand were set down to tear the ghosts of cutlets off two cindery bones to the accompaniment of sawdusty bread. Get the feeling of that

JOY OF TYROL,

meal on your tongue, and remember that we ate it doggedly and paid the bill, and prithee canonize us forthwith, for surely it sounds Biblical enough—*Ink for wine, string for meat, bread unto the discipline of their souls, and beds that were damp as tears.* To this day we never meet, though O'Brian is now a Member of what he calls Pyarliament, without tasting together some morsel or another of that night's experience over again.

Miss Ronnell has that habit of concentration on whatever is said to her, however trivial it may be, which goes with unselfish instincts, no whit of greedy curiosity, only the wish to get into other people's minds so as to see the world through their eyes, and times innumerable these last few days I have felt kindly towards her aunts for the natural girlishness their treatment has left in her unspoiled. The things she enjoys, what she says—and what she never thinks of saying—impress one as so fresh and unaffected that one thinks of a rapid-growing creeper kept back in a pot, and planted out long after its roots have gained unusual strength; its joy of life comes suddenly as it throws its leaves out and climbs into the sunshine—which reminds me of a piece of our road to-day, cut for miles through the sloping hillside, which the Gracious Old Mother, with her eternal hobby of pottering in the soil, has turned into the most lovely rock-garden conceivable.

The lips of red alpenrose and purple clematis and yellow rockrose were almost audible; cushion plants of sandwort, saxifrage, and houseleek had trimmed harsh edges of rock with dainty broideries of colour; here and there tall lilies, rampions, monkshood, white lupins, stood sentry-like in clumps.

Miss Ronnell was tremendously impressed by what she called the "splendid daring" and "final taste" of

SAN STEFANO DI CADORE

it, and but for some sanity which prevents and checks my feelings, I should have audibly observed that the finest part of it was hidden from her ; for as she glanced about with transparent joy, sky, mountains, and soil together must have seen that the best which each had to give was already in concentrated form in her.

What shall I more say ? Time would fail me to tell of the canary-coloured bell-flower with spikes and woolly leaves, of the soft purple thistles which cast a mellow hue, of ferns, of grasses—I will no more say. I will leave you to conjure up in your prolific mind a Paradise filled with the joy and laughter and radiance of flowers, and when you have laid it out regardless of cost, and reached the farthest limit of your imagination, then I will tell you that the little thing you have conceived is a ha'penny bauble in comparison with that highway for tramps down which we came to-day !

Poor Ronnell is sore afflicted with a sprained ankle, begotten of a wobbly boulder on to which he jumped in pursuit of a lizard, which affliction so loosened his tongue that we heard many things at dinner about nerves, temperament, and digestive organs. I had hitherto imagined the exclusive possession of "the faculty." After dinner—which he appeared to assimilate with considerable comfort—he tested a series of liqueurs bearing euphonious names till he found one to his taste, swallowed it with the large grace of post-prandial contentment, declaring that he felt almost himself again—and forthwith ordered another.

I ought to turn in, but I have such curious sensations—of Heaven only knows what—that I go on writing for something to do, though there is nothing more to say. A warm breeze is purring about an acacia tree whose leaves touch my window, and the voice of the cicada is heard in the land.

JOY OF TYROL

It is a good thing, considering the uncertainty of our mortal days, to spend some of them in Italy, which reminds me it came out in conversation that she was born in Fiesole, where the old baronet had a villa for many years.

The Parish Clock is now saying Midnight with all the unfeeling hesitation of an old-fashioned dentist at his work. It does not matter, I have no sleep in me.

I shall write steadily on till breakfast-time. I think Ronnell ought to drive, an ankle is a pretty serious thing. We shall walk. We, I—— Does it not strike you as beyond measure strange that, though I only touched it very reverently, its soft brown strands have in some extraordinary way plaited themselves into my thoughts ?

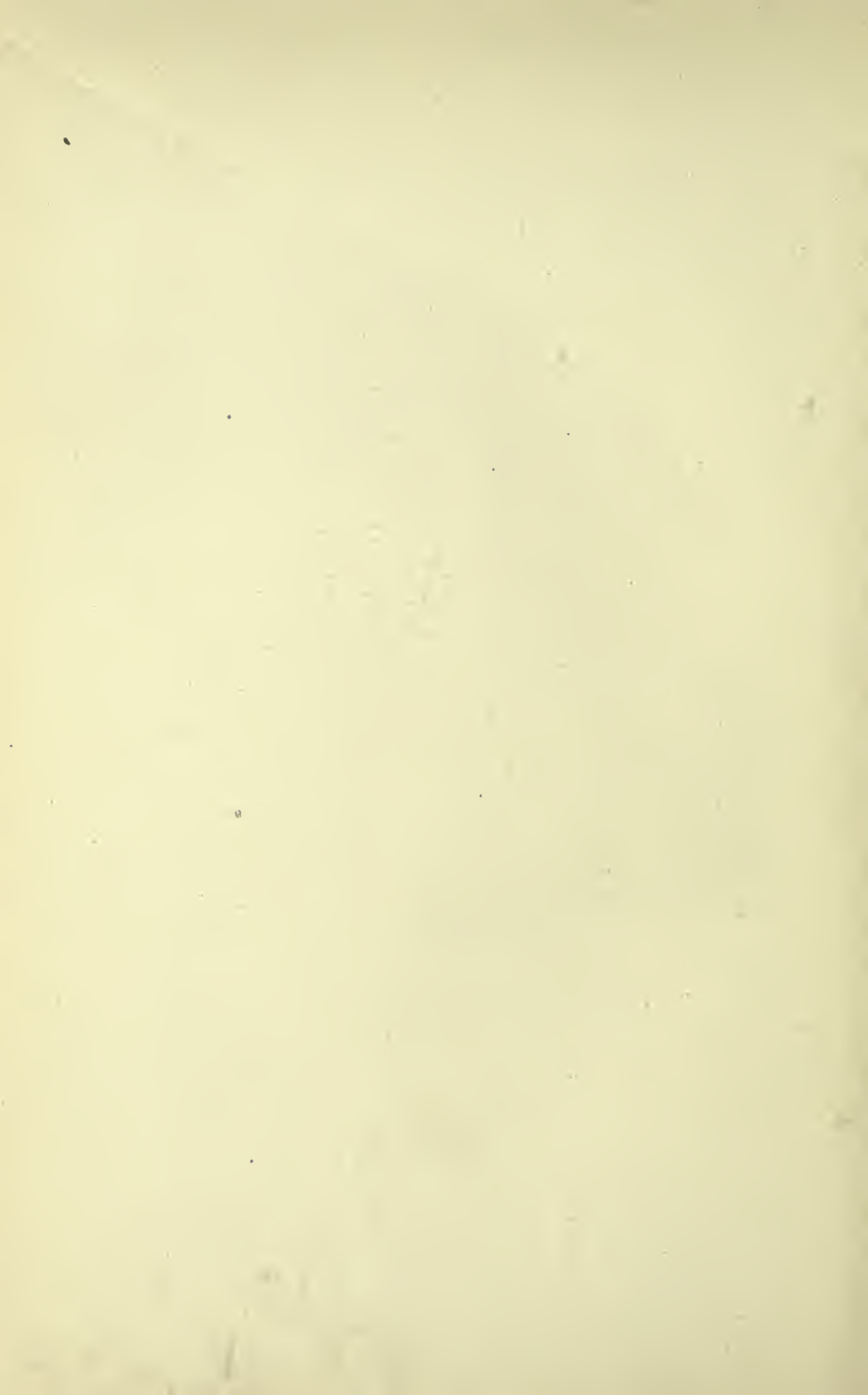
But the dawn—look here, when the dawn is kicking its sheets off, and you can see its toes and almost hear its yawns, surely one may ask a serious question ?

Do you think that sometimes the Creator, looking down on the men and women He has made, sees perhaps one on whom He smiles, because in her He has realized His idea ?

This valley air has drugs in it. I am quite suddenly
sl——

PIEVE DI CADORE





PIEVE DI CADORE

XVII

FOR once I know exactly what it is to be a creature of dust. I am encrusted with it, and while I wait my turn at the bath, here goes—dust to dust, though the blue Heaven of Titian only knows what my pen has in it.

Ex-curate I am, but expert I also fancied in the matter of men and women; yes, women, clever and dull, pretty and plain, and—to leave none outside—ladies.

So I fancied until this morning, when in less than an hour one single girl talking about what she believes made me feel like a street urchin outside his native slum for the first time.

We left the accommodating ankle with the owner to keep an eye and a poultice on it till noon, when they followed us by carriage to Gogna, whence after lunch we drove here by the dustiest of all dusty roads.

Our walk was through one of the grandest ravines in existence.

The Venetian mountains shrugging vast shoulders against Heaven loomed on us callously, their lower slopes scattered with firs, larches, and silver-beeches clinging miraculously to the rocky surface, and with boulders perilously insecure, ready at a hint to jump into the pale green river beneath, whose lace-like edges made the only thing of movement within sight.

JOY OF TYROL

The road, a bracket cut out of the hills on the north side, follows their twisting contour, and above it sullen heights stand precipitate and silent, as if consciously a part of some portentous ceremony. A place for Hans Andersen to people with unwonted beings; at his merriest I can't conceive his putting into it a common parson and a Priestess of the Sun, yet they were there this morning, and at the finest part of it they sat for half an hour on the roadside parapet, with their twenty toes adangle over Eternity: one shove would have settled all their affairs.

The spirit of the place took possession of her, glowed through eyes, lips, and brow; her profile against the colours of the gorge below was a lyric called out of its mist and music. The sunshine played like a butterfly about her



hair, glinting with every movement; it excited me in an unaccountable way. Why, because she happens to be a woman, should her hair be exciting? I am prepared to cut Ronnell's hair carefully with my nail-scissors and forget all about it at once, save for the object I should produce; but his sister's! It comes no doubt of my having been such an ass about her, which was Lois' fault for never having told me what a mighty good sort her Marsalys is.

Now about what she said. She has the earnestness of a child or of a seer, I know not which, but it has the effect of music, lifts one on to other planes; one forgets even her personal charm before the flight of her mind and the spaces it cuts open.

That hits one in a girl of so much humour, physical

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joy, and human interest in all sorts of little things, to find her an open-air girl, with not only the eyes of a mystic but the instincts of a saint, yet without one taint of what is only too commonly called Religion.

She goes to her point like a cabby who knows his streets, with one idea, to get there.

Suppose her a parson who had preached to an average congregation what she said to me, there would have been an excited crowd about the vestry after service, of (1) indignant spinsters with annuities and sleeping-car tickets through to Paradise, prepared to "Joan of Arc" her; (2) married women with sons inviting her to tea on the chance of her influencing their dear Archies, Charlies, and Bobbies; and (3) business men whom she interested in matters of life and death as they never had been before, prepared to chair her round the parish.

In the vestry she would be undoing the collars of the incumbent and churchwardens to prevent fatal results of their three apoplectic fits.

There is Ronnell—the bath is free.

Once More.

We dined among a fashionable throng of Alpinisti officers and their womenkind, all in fine feathers; but when Miss Ronnell clattered to our table, short-skirted, and producing a noise with her hob-nails which made them look round, the bejewelled women in low dresses and smart gilt-edged officers seemed like villagers at a bean-feast.

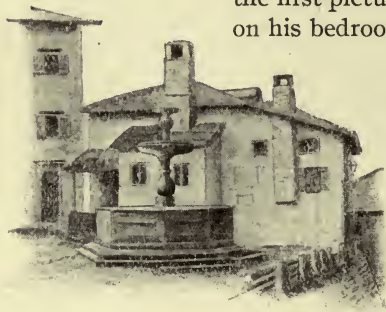
Immeasurably good is this Pieve.

To see it is to realize the magic of genius, it is so obviously the only possible birthplace for the great colourist.

Dropped blindfold into the square, if you were told to unbandage and guess where you were, you would

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say at first glance "Titian's place." Palaces of long defunct Venetian nobles blink through drowsy windows into the Piazza, and the Casa Tiziano still sits on its perch.



We explored it, followed the caretaker upstairs, saw the first picture of the Great Man smudged on his bedroom wall with juices of berries, etc., and swallowed whatever she told us, as a wise man swallows physic.

It's the acme of imbecility to want to get behind a tale so charming! —a boy of twelve carrying up handfuls of spinach, fruit, and blossoms from the garden to

his bedroom, and making a Madonna and Bambino out of them to watch him in his sleep and be there to bless him when he woke.

But I have not told what she said, and the night is old. In succinctest form you shall have it; sprinkle it with occasional "I thinks" for yourself.

In the Dawn of Things, across untold ages, the Great Artificer held in His hand a little flaming ball. He spun it into a place specially planned, and watched it settle down, and as He watched, He loved it, and conceived the idea of peopling it with creatures who, in course of time, should grow companionable, able to share with Him some of His feelings and interests. He liked the idea, cherished it, and watched the ball through a thousand centuries, and when it cooled made His thoughts into living beings upon it, each with a craving for something beyond the ball itself of course, because each had come into existence as a part of His Infinite

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Thought. So here we are, you and I. That is the telescopic—this is the microscopic view :

The creatures, from the moment they consciously began to think about themselves, found their thoughts dragging them to something far beyond themselves, and do so still. So we have a variety of cravings—Brahmin, Buddhist, Christian, and so on.

Eye at the microscope too long brings confusion ; the variety of faiths, cravings, home-sicknesses, blurs the lens and you lose perspective ; but if from the present variety you get back—through the telescope—to the First Thought out of which all was born, there comes the focus, and you do not lose your head : you just remember you are looking at an immense achievement, only half done, and try to be neither child nor fool. We have seen the effect of the Light of the World on the Western Hemisphere, but the Western nations have short-sighted souls, not equal to a big landscape ; when the same Light comes to the Eastern peoples, whose souls are all eyes and see as easily behind as in front, like flies, things—big things—will happen.

A giant dominating peak here came into sight ; she swept it into service as if it had been a paper-knife.

You see that ? Suppose a dozen climbers meeting on top, each from a different country : each would see a different view, because he would see it through his own past experience and habit of mind. The one view would be a dozen views to them separately. But if you could cook all their eyes into one large lens, you would get a vision of such intense meaning as we cannot now imagine.

So we are all carrying to the future something which will add to the interest of it to the others when the time comes.

Thus far, we Christianized people are only discussing

JOY OF TYROL

the merits of our boots and our ice-axes ; all these centuries we have been working at what we call " Christianity," and are still only half-way up—have no large sense of it at all. Rome has made it into a patent gas, only supplied to subscribers ; the Reformers regarded it as something to be done up in packets and handed round to be analysed, talked about, and " taken ;" and lots of good people still think it is something to be argued about.

When the Inside Idea catches the Mind of the East, there will rise up a New Heaven and a New Earth out of its Philosophy, and a wave of fresh revelation will sweep back over us dry, dull people.

She ended with this strange outburst : " I wish I could see the end of it—every one understanding why he was made and what is ahead—the Maker with all His thought coming home again as sons and daughters—every one abundantly full of life at the thought of His Supreme Companionship."

I ought not to have written these things.

I probably do injustice, and perhaps leave a wrong impression ; but it is plain to me that, theories as these are, they are vital to her, and to listen to them called up a blend of Deborah, Catherine of Siena, and Diana of the Crossways, if you can make one woman out of the three.

From her flight of optimism she suddenly swerved down into an excited argument about Foreign Missions being the first duty of a Christian, but Ronnell overtook us before she made her point. As he pulled up, she said a very human thing : " Not a word of this before him, it would bore him horribly ; besides, I am sure he is all right, he's so fond of dogs."

Roman ? Not much. Anglican ? Maybe.

Whatever it is, it's far from dull.

PIEVE DI CADORE

After our gaudy dinner she went to get this bronze Titian in the Piazza, while Ronnell and I hied to a café in sight of her.

Half a dozen local bloods gathered at the next table, played dominoes, and imbibed a long series of pink drinks straight on for an hour or more. As they sat, their spirits rose by leaps and bounds.

He blinked into their doings solemnly, and when noisy gesticulations increased, pointed out signs of intoxication, and prepared me for stilettos, runnels of gore, and all sorts of melodrama.

While he was licking his grave lips over his sister's "silly Romance people," they got up amid screams of laughter and dispersed quietly.

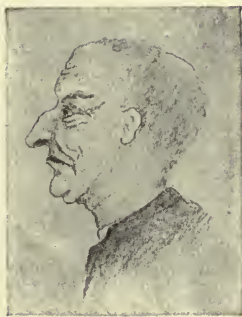
I ordered a glass of the potent pink stuff, told him I should like to see him excited for once, and dared him to drink it. He has courage in drinks and did, at one gulp.

It was iced water tinged with strawberry juice !

Why, oh why, did my misguided parents have me taught to write ? I ought to have been asleep hours ago.



AURONZO DI CADORE



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AURONZO DI CADORE

XVIII

FOR your letter much thanks.

To your demands, Amen, but about Sterzing you are wholly wrong : there was no awkwardness whatever in the way she showed the tract ; you forget her brother—a most annoying factor in our intercourse—and her own sense of humour.

As to the rot which your last letter contained, it will have become clear from my epistles how far off the scent you were, but to this I confess—a stronger and deeper sense of comradeship with her than I ever felt about any woman. The operation of falling in love is one of those many matters in which I am a mere child. With her I cannot imagine it at all, because she is for ever giving out something of her own most beautiful nature, and leaves never a chance of giving in return—as well try a duet with a nightingale on a Jews' harp!

A maddening telegram from Lois :

"Rooms engaged Mirabella; join us day after to-morrow," recalls the pessimistic sigh of our old Scots nurse, "A weary worrld and fu' o' corns." It seems full of Soup at present, with this bothering aunt on her way to Cortina.

I have sent my whole soul to Lois :

"Birdlime her sheets, pillow, and bedroom floor; leave stuck; come alone."

Lois I do not so much object to, she will get on well

JOY OF TYROL

with Ronnell ; but the mere idea of that old Jezebel sullyng these dear Dolomites with her opulent disorders dabs me in the eyes and stings like soap.

Ronnell asked if there were a blacksmith at hand, as it might be wise to have my nails filed. He would find little to joke about if he knew Julienne.

His ankle is in its right mind again, but we saved it as far as the Three Bridges in the only available Pieve cab, which was so decrepit that as it rumbled along we discovered what new wine feels like fermenting in an old bottle.

Ma Mio Dio ! the colouring was good. Turn after turn the road brought us upon huge Titian canvases—green maize in splashes of his favourite tint, mountain shadows done in



that purple with which he clad so many a Madonna, the red blood of poppies moist as if he had smudged it straight from his palette on to the landscape ; it was like being in his studio.

While this elfin outline was coming into being Ronnell was impatient to “try his new ankle,” and we footed it hither miles and miles and miles through great and gracious ways, which led at last to that crowning pleasure of a long walk, than which all the joys of travel have nothing better to give—a good old-fashioned bath.

At the hour when the claims of bed become urgent certain shrewd fellows of the nicer sort, who had turned in with a guide, foregathered with us and proved companionable—ours the first English they had heard for

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weeks. Both were Oxford men, one a raconteur of parts. We forgot bed.

Par exemple—I wish I could hand on this as clean as he gave it :

“ Up the Zumphing Thal, at the village post office he asked for letters, handing his card to the female official. She glanced at it and replied ‘ Nee-ouchtz,’ through which guttural patois he recognized a negative ; but being certain there were things, he wrote his name on the back of it as it would be given on a letter and presented it again, whereupon she bowed with unusual reverence, threw open the door into her private room, and—pointing to a large stack of letters, cards, packets, and newspapers, which had apparently been growing for many seasons—said with unfeigned respect, ‘ Hochwohlgeborner Herr Esq, there are the letters which have come for you. Many times have I sent away Englishmen who wanted to look through them, for I knew in my soul that some day Herr Esq would himself arrive, and I have kept them safe.’ ”

He declared that the only occasion on which he ever felt tempted to use the abominable word “ obsessed ” was when he stood before that heap of dusty correspondence, to which he as Mr. Esq was supposed to have claim, three postcards and one letter only of which were addressed to him.

In return for a heap of good things I gave a story I had from a guide of the Reiseck region N.E. of this :

“ A callow cowboy, paid by certain villagers to take their herd of seventy cows daily up to a grassy alp, two thousand feet above, to feed through summer, on a direful July day three years ago saw them, at noon, stick up their ears and make a sudden bolt towards a precipice. He imagined some ordinary bovine spree, and lurched after them with heavy-booted deliberation

JOY OF TYROL

as one who knows his cows and the risk of a long drop ; but, like the Gadarene swine with devils at their vitals, the entire herd flung themselves into the air, facing the peril of a drop of fifteen hundred feet, and—— !

“ The loon sat on an edge of rock for hours afterwards, peering down, and reckoning up to the best of his ability the total result of what had taken place in terms of Kreutzers, which done, he betook himself body and soul to such lone places among the rocks—which he knew well—as would afford him safe hiding, and cranberries against his hunger, and for thirty hours allayed his pangs and secreted his trepidating soul, till at the thirty-first the fear of a second solitary night drove him back to the village, and, as he thought likely, a torturous death. Meagrely equipped for telling a fact succinctly, many hours elapsed before the villagers got from him the whereabouts of their kine, and when at last they understood, set forth with trays and ambulances on which to carry back the beef to sell, thus to recoup themselves in their disaster. Armed with saws and knives, they reached the level of their dead cattle, and paused thunderstruck at the sight of the black tail of a comet-like flock of birds bigger than any they had ever seen, floating away southward dark as a cloud. Vultures are vultures ! and of their cows they found only the bones picked clean.”

I made it plain that the guide with all the pomp and circumstance of truth assured me that this was exactly what had taken place, and that the birds were “ African vultures,” also that I asked which way the wind was blowing at the time, and he replied “ From the North hard,” and how fast vultures can fly, to which he replied “ Four days in one when they scent flesh.”

The merry man wanted to drink to the tale and toast it in champagne ; the other thought it ought to be to

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the wind, because even Marconi can't telegraph smell from one continent to another. "No," said the M.M., "to the tale, because a first-rate lie is born, not made."

We sat late. It was jolly. Miss Ronnell stayed up till we separated, evidently greatly enjoying herself, but the shyness I noticed at first—and had forgotten—was curiously marked. She is quite delightful in her manner with men, but I think can have come across very few.

It is pleasant to have two nice, healthy-minded Englishmen under the same roof.

We stay here to-morrow. It is a restful place. Benedicite.

XIX

AURONZO DI CADORE.

One of those mornings of deliberate laziness which fill themselves with interests such as one could never plan out oneself; if I told you of everything into which I have poked my nose these three hours, two days hence a wire would put an end to my saintly efforts:

"Not a single detail more."

The village is one ridiculously attenuated street, pulled out so thin in the middle that it is snapping at a row of old cottages. Its northern end I see from my window wandering over the hills like a caravan of white camels, with dark wooden backs, and the slopes are ablaze with flowers.

Among other things I hobnobbed with a priest, an



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excitable person, but informing. The name, he told me, comes from gold once mined; they now get silver, and no doubt will end with copper; and to judge by their latest church, which cost £12,000, flourish exceedingly, though they hardly got their money's worth in the edifice, which looks more like a gigantic portmanteau than a religious building. He was amusing about its lid, which persists in letting in water, so that in bad weather "the devout worship the Almighty in a shower bath," and of good value about his people, their devotion to their church and homes, and the simplicity of their hearts.

Miss Ronnell, alas! missed this, which would have been as honey and the honeycomb to her. "When our young men are unable to get work here they emigrate; directly they have made a fortune they come back." £200 is in their eyes a "fortune."

I told him of our Scotsmen who go to alien lands for the same purpose, who speak—with tears in their throats—at Burns dinners about "Bonnie Scotland," and when they have made their fortunes settle down for the rest of their days in any country except their own.



"Ah!" he exclaimed, "the Cadorini could not; they love their soil; they cannot help it, their beautiful land."—I shall now collect the Ronnells for lunch.

Too late to write more, but I must.

After lunch, while Ronnell and I were at coffee outside, my Padre turned up. I seized him. The lady appeared, was introduced, sat down, quoted an Italian

AURONZO DI CADORE

line about the Patience of the Mountains, and—started him on what is clearly his pet passion.

She pressed a button, rung up the soul of all his souls, made him talk with every fibre of his body, mind, and spirit, wrinkle his brow and cheeks into ruts, and turn his eyes into two grey mice which ran in and out of his face as if they were circus-trained. As to nose and ears, the Ronnellism gives “An Octopus in Holy Orders.” Hear him (the priest, I mean):

“God opens to us no greater intimacy than that of the mountains. The way is long and slow, through thralldom, understanding, liking, love, to devotion—yes, absolutely it becomes that! At first glance they seem sullen, cold, silent, but when you know them—no; when thunder-clouds dash at their peaks they curse, but the sun shows them, a little later, smiling whiter than before.”

He said it as if for friends, anxious that we should not misjudge them, and went on:

“At sundown they frown on our valleys, but theirs is the first light of each to-morrow; their gleams waken our hopes long before we see the dawn.” With lowered voice: “Remember what the flowers feel; gentians weave blue girdles about their loins, edelweiss vies with snow in clasping their breasts with silver, and below, their robes glisten with crimson alpenrose and gold of S. John’s wort down to their ankles in the laughing streams.” At last, hands outstretched, he stood up and finished in staccato sentences: “One great fact—you cannot miss it—it hits you at every turn—in towns it is not so—here it is emphatic—everything is exactly as the Good God would have it—everything is as it leaves His hands—His fingers are at work while we watch—Ecco! we are children standing in His workshop—He lets us look on while He does it—look at those

JOY OF TYROL.

smiling fields—they feel His touch—that is why flowers are beautiful—look at that meadow—a rainbow slept in its grass last night—now it is awaking.”

He broke off suddenly, wiped his bald old poll, finished at one gulp his untouched coffee, and piped with shrill abruptness, “Just as the Good God would have it all. Addio,” and was off!

In English, language of the leaden lip, it lacks softness; as he said it, it rose, fell, hovered, and rang like music.

Now I bid you see in this something of her power of calling out from people what they feel most, for which very reason they would in most circumstances be dumb on the subject. The old man distinctly started at his first glance of her, as if he had looked into a vast unknown world. There is that about her face at times—a gate into a land of rich fertile plains and mysterious heights; her eyes suggest it.

He impressed us quite a good lot by his affectionate emotion, he might well have been speaking of his wife and children. When he wandered away down the street, she sighed, “For a man like that, what an awful waste——”

“What’s wrong with his figure?” her brother wanted to know.

“Yahoo,” she said, “w-a-s-t-e, that he is not married; he might have found all he searches for in the depths of a woman’s nature.”

“Ecco!” he mimicked the Padre with arms and eyes, “it struck me he was keenest on high things.”

I hand on this silliness because it is the outer form his growing affection takes; his tone is completely changing—it is interesting to watch the development.

While we dined we became aware of two typical

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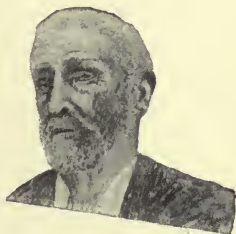
English pensionnaires at a table near ours—creatures of platitudes, goloshes, prejudices, and hats which look as if they slept in them—who might well have mistaken us for a couple of Cowley Fathers eloping with a nun, to judge by their raucous innuendoes which they compelled us to hear.

“Better Papists out and out—No further help from me till the Eastward position is given up—I compelled the Chaplain to take down the Cross made of flowers”—and so on, like a pair of religious cuckoo clocks. It took the flavour from our meal, one looked for flies among the salad for no other reason than that they were in the room, but the conscious air of having witnessed with which they went out was delicious.

We all regretted that the Merry Man had left; he would have worked up a gem out of what we heard. Later, they were giving pompous orders to their cab-driver—“cavaliero” they called him!—in the most broken Italian ever tortured through long teeth.

If the source from which they spring is known to any living creature, it ought to be bricked up by public subscription; they are at this eerie moment in the next room—I know it, for I almost tripped over four long elastic-sided canoes as I came along the passage! Heaven send dreamless sleep! I dread the thought of racing along interminable passages, crossed at intervals by hurdles of high thin teeth interwoven with attenuated footgear, for thus the memory of the day would be smirched, and it has been a day whose epitaph is the little word PAX.

And now my most enticing couch—no, I will tell you more.



JOY OF TYROL

As the clocks were striking nine we wandered up to a seat in a pine wood.

Ronnell had a letter to finish and joined us in a very few minutes, but every one of them was good.

Only the stars leaning down out of the darkness guided us along the path, and the silence walked with us.

Three times only—this the third—alone with her, each a revelation of large tracts of vision.

We talked disconnectedly. I urged her ; to listen and imagine lips, eyes, brow, touches the words with the mystery of the Unseen.

She talked of the elemental things, of what they are leading to.

I had that rare emotion which lays hold of few, the emotion which the brimming convictions of another can alone produce. I know now that, however she has arrived at her conclusions, she has no shadow of doubt about them.

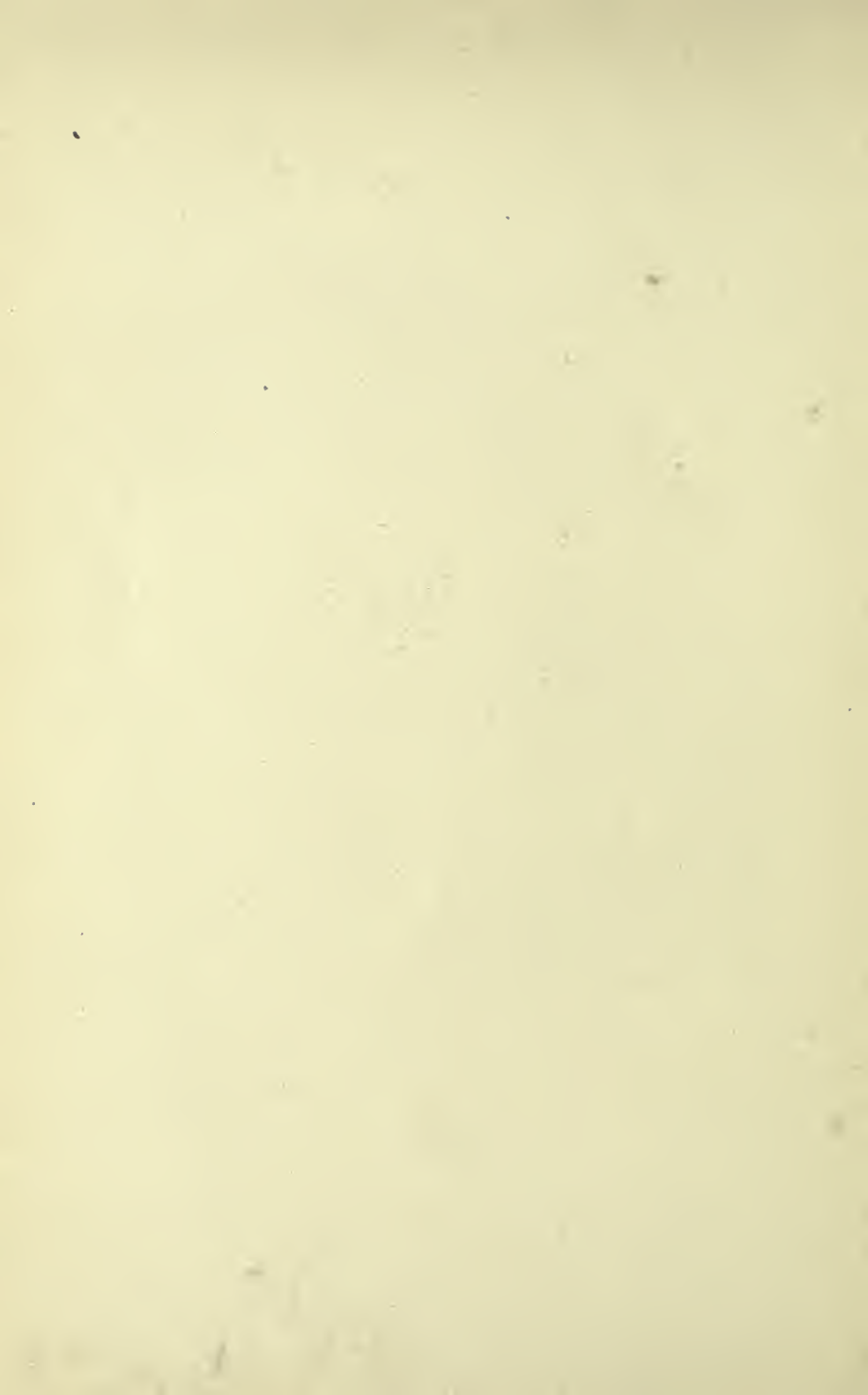
A mere girl, yes, but a weird gift of synthesis ! She approaches the big problems like a child with outspread arms, and speaks of them with astonishingly simple expressions—" Divine anxiety about our future," " The motherliness of Pain," " The Eternal ambitions for men."

She—— No. Buona Notte.

P.S.—Is not Marsalys a beautiful name ? Margaret is fine prose, and Rosalys ; Marsalys is a poem.

CORTINA D'AMPEZZO





CORTINA D'AMPEZZO

XX

I HAVE seen the sufferer from procrastinitis, and had audience of the imperative aunt, who commands us to dine with them, so here is my jot concerning a day—not such as men call delightful or any of such sort, but—a nicely rounded little Eternity all compact of Joy, Beauty, and Wonder. I—She—— Words to tell it come with hesitation, knowing how precious is what I want them to convey.

Meanwhile, measure our doings by the map, and appreciate the effects of a bath and black coffee in that I have it in me to write at all.

The last pink feather of the wing of Day is disappearing over the wall of our valley, and the quietness of evening is filling the earth. The early hours had faery presences about them, soil steeped in dew, sunbeams rollicking among the grass and tossing its moisture into the air, making an elixir out of the thoughts of innumerable flowers.

That multitude of little saints whose feet are in the soil and whose eyes turn Heavenward let their ideas overflow so openly that if one could listen with one's nostrils one would know their whole world. The mantle of the Padre is not upon me, fear not; and the coffee was poor stuff! I thought I was going to take you such a pretty outing. Ah! I'll light my—— Yes, now I will pipe unto you.

JOY OF TYROL,

Sorapis, Marmarola, Cristallo are but names to you ; to us they are elements like fire or water ; yet have they stooped to walk with us like very friends, and henceforth I promise them a place in my philosophy.

Coming towards it, Cristallo loomed higher and higher with majestic grandeur as we rose, the light glinting off the edges of its buff cliffs as from silver dust. Among mountains it is alone—has no relations, no one resembling it—stands out from where we saw it first, like the foundation of an Eternal Temple whose dome would rise far above the clouds.

It made one feel how natural idolatry is: the senses call up the emotions, they in turn overflow on to the reason, and immediately the human inclination to do something is aroused.

Some such process started in Miss Ronnell, but by damming the channel between emotions and reason she produced a reaction and this ridiculous story: "I was once looking from my windows at the view of a very remarkable mountain—for which view, simply and solely, the hotel existed—when the wife of a millionaire tootled up in a silver-plated motor-car. The proprietor, who was at the door, with unbalanced enthusiasm started off before she had alighted on a panegyric about the scenery quite as if he had made it himself, declaiming straight on till, with a forbidding hand held up, she turned to her courier and asked, 'What in the wilderness is all this escape of gas about? Why don't he let me get out?' The courier explained that it was about the mountain. Then, taking a hasty glance, she gave her verdict as though the world were agape to hear it: 'Why, there isn't much wrong with the mountain; for a thing in the rough it isn't bad at all, but for a finished sight you want to see the First Garden Hotel at Los Angeles.'"

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"Finished sight" almost tied Ronnell into a knot; he choked over it like a baby with whooping cough!

On our way from the pass of Tre Croci—which is a Pischgah from which to see wonders, Cristallo and Pomagognon a great bastion to our right—an incongruous group of women

like caterpillars in half-woven cocoons and men like fat brown bears laboured past; farther on a gigantic motor-car

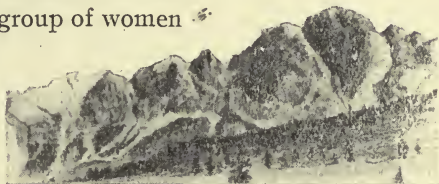
was being towed by three pairs of foaming oxen.

A narrow road, a car too long to turn on it, and many miles between them and the nearest garage, afforded us some sinless amusement.

When she is amused she bubbles like a spring of sweet water straight from the depths. When speaking of people or nations—however weak or stupid may be their tricks—it is always with humanity and charity, full of excuses; but when people touch her sense of humour, as these spurting themselves on petrol and wheels through a land like this, she gives her mind a "day out" and goes into convulsions.

Hi! ho! dinner in fifty minutes, and the best to put down—the play of evening light—which no one but an ass would attempt. Howbeit, across the sky white clouds were billowing in from the West, and time after time rushed on to the peak—like waves dashing home to the land—surging back in disappointed spray.

South, Pelmo the sullen, gathered a cloak about his shoulders of gross darkness; and above, the pink brow of Civetta, still in the sphere of day, bent devoutly; North of her, the black Five Towers, like forts upset by earthquake, held grim profiles against a sheet of



JOY OF TYROL

cloud ; but, best of all this day's gifts, Cristallo at that hour !

When first we saw it, a pile of crystalline rock ; later on an infinite heap of spindrift ; then a puff of pink smoke ; yet at last, as clearly as such could be figured,



a mighty, trembling soul, under the impulse of what Carlyle calls the Immensities, moving within itself, casting off clouds of doubt, grinding falsehoods into spray, and coming, within a few minutes, into victory clear and final. Think of it ! The foundation of a Temple ; a shapeless heap of crags ; the sponge of a Titan ; yet at last a dazzling edifice all buttresses and clerestories and golden roofs.

The sun never wrought miracle with finer touch or more perfect finish.

I must to the party, at which you doubtless will think I deserve—thistles.

Post Prandium.

Her ladyship hath a regal suite bedecked with flowers in her Belgravian style, but the woman herself—oh most curiously wonderful !—was, at sight of Miss Ronnell, translated.

The girl is a witch.

They had not met before, so I watched that wrinkled face narrowly as she first looked at her, and am prepared

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to say on oath that an almost religious expression passed over it.

My knees trembled when we went in. I wondered what acid remark would open her entertainment. But within five minutes I was wondering whether I had not done the old girl an injustice.

What happened is simply explained: Miss Ronnell transformed her by her own mere presence into her best self—a person I have never seen before—as spring sunshine alters the face of the earth.

The easy brilliance with which she defended in turn Romans, Dissenters, Presbyterians, High and Broad Anglicans, and even Plymouth Brethren, was a triumph of dialectic, which any one who knows my aunt would enjoy, regarding herself as she does as specially briefed for what she calls her Church, and detesting all others with blind animosity.

She made Miss Ronnell talk on this favourite topic of her own, was badly scored off time after time, but was so surprised by the wide information this delightful girl displayed that she even forgot to lose her temper.

Twice the old lady tried to get Ronnell to talk, with comic result. "My niece tells me you are very fond of Borzois, Sir Arnold."

"Quite," mumbled he, as if that closed the subject.

And later on: "Now, what do you think of all this Socialist propaganda at home?"

"Couldn't say—before ladies!"

His sister says he cuts down his words as if they were to be wired to Mars at five guineas per letter.

But how this memory will haunt me!

Aristophanes and all ye Comedians watch me as I write it: *For one whole evening Juliette Purley Caterham, legally a lady—note the "legally"—has worn a smile, thrown no vitriol, and left a not unpleasant impression.*

JOY OF TYROL.

At the time it seemed a miracle. Of course it was nothing of the sort. This is a most arresting girl, as sweet as she is natural; but if I had not been there I should have doubted if even she could have done it.

She wore a dark green velvet dress, trimmed with old lace; a heart-shaped diamond pendant hung between her sun-tanned throat and the pale skin of her neck; as graceful a figure as woman could pray for; head with soft hair drawn back, parted in the middle showing the shape of it—a head in charge of the body, not as with many women a mere top of the body with a disturbed nest on it largely made of hairpins.

There is far more in her than I imagined could be packed into any one of her age—flame, humour, sympathy, and understanding. I sat opposite at dinner while Soup monopolized her, enjoying every turn and every change of expression, all the life and movement in her face and most bewitching dimples; and walking back—— By Gemini, the clock is clanging 1 a.m. ! and I promised my converted relative to pay her my addresses at 8 a.m.

P.S.—*In bed.*—I know not why, but while I was undressing the thought of the thousands of people who have felt more humanly—and perhaps more truly—about the Almighty, because they approached Him, this very day, through the medium of what to them is an inexpressibly good woman, flashed through my mind.

Curious mental aberration, whence I know not.

P.S. ii.—There was, I guess, a good deal more than that lovely green dress in the trunk forwarded here. I should like to have a look at the books.

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XXI

CORTINA D'AMPEZZO.



I am possessed, for my sins maybe, of an aunt who, of all the sordid, interfering, devastating servants of His Infernal Majesty, is the finest example of the worst type.

Meek as a sucking dove I went, her smiles fluttering about my memory—found her alone, in bed.

She has not even the manners of a brawling fishwife. She behaved like a starved eagle tearing the air with her talons, would not shake hands, said she had spent a sleepless night, had sent Lois to her “charming friend,” as she wished to see me alone. Oh yes, she said she was in loco parentis to me! It’s the first time she has taken a parental line, and shall be the last.

“So, my young nephew, you have been employing your inexperienced wits in muddling your worldly prospects. Only last night I learned from Lois that you have accepted a living in the slums, with a parish of scavengers and a rectory not fit to fatten pigs in. Had I not missed my *Church Times* through illness, I should have written to the Bishop and forbidden it. As things are, I have three things to say: first, that you are a fool; second, that you must withdraw from

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this appointment ; and third, that you must marry this Miss Ronnell."

I jumped as if her talons were in my throat, but she went on : " Don't interrupt me. I am not a fool ; you are. I know the world ; you don't. If you will be sensible, you shall have the family living ; till it falls vacant you can take a respectable curacy. You know what a lovely parish it is—a fine house and over a thousand a year ; but you could not

run it on that : you must therefore marry wisely, and this charming girl——"

I broke in with a frank expression of my feelings, said I would not hear Miss Ronnell talked about like so much scrip, and got off some

sentences calculated to impress even a fishwife, but they fell like dew upon the roof of a pigsty ! The unsensitive brute went bluntly on :

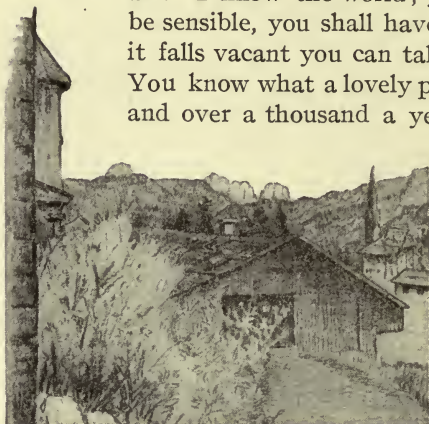
" You have been with her for three weeks practically alone ; her brother is a kind of lay monk, in my opinion, and you owe it to her : if you do not propose you are unworthy to be a clergyman of my Church."

Worthy or unworthy, I silently cursed her with carefully selected, powerful curses, and cleared out.

Shortly afterwards, while I was having a shampoo to cool my head, a rung of the barber's chair snapped in my grip—at the moment I imagined it the woman's neck.

How small a flame kindleth a whole world !

Twelve hours ago I sat here writing contentedly, now



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everything is charred. The very air smells smoky, the mountains are stale. I shrink from her because she has been talked of as a bargain, and am suddenly self-conscious about the jolliest, cleverest, best girl I ever knew.

If you want my aunt's address it's 666, Mirabella.

Midnight.

Lois tells me she must get away early to-morrow as "Soup has got bed devils," a condition bordering on insanity, it appears, lasting for two days during which she fulminates at large on whomsoever she can reach—from her bed!

She had a series at Carlsbad, and a large attack at Munich.

We strolled together up the road at sunset, and watched the valley, which had been filled with light like pale red wine, pull white coverlets of mist over it, and at the hour when the earth is preparing for sleep met the cows coming home, tinkling among the gullies like the voice of many waters, flowing like a narrow golden stream out the mountains.

Of things earthly, women first for me, dogs next, but easily third these café-au-lait Tyrolese cows. Some of them stopped in the friendliest way, and grumphled into her hands while she kissed them between the eyes, and then waddled off in solemn knock-kneed style, as if the little poor man of Assisi had preached a sermon to them.

Her triumph of last night had light shed on it: she has a hypnotic power over animals. She talked to them



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as a child to its dolls: "Look at me, darling. Yes, I see the world up there in your eyes still; walking on Mother Nature's lap all day, were you? You're breath is sweet because you're full of wild flowers—but oh, what a sticky tongue!" While wiping her ear she observed that whoever invented the cow-bell deserves the Order of Merit, or its equivalent wherever he is now; it completes the magic of the Alps. I wish you could see and hear her bubbling over.

During dinner she caught sight of a lady she met some years ago in Rome, whom she and Lois tracked afterwards and found in the garden.

They heard a pitiful tale of how, after losing everything, she is now, under an assumed name, trying to keep herself by teaching.

After our smoke Ronnell went in; I joined the girls. His sister was in tremendous form, talking with all the eloquence of shoulders, hands, and heart, her sweetness quite enveloping her Italian lady.

Since this morning I had felt like a roughly handled cat—wanted to go into a corner and silently lick my sores. I'm glad I did not. When I sat down she smiled across, and went on with what she was saying: "But it cannot be possible to dream or imagine, or even to long greatly for, anything better than what is going to be some day; all beautiful ideas and desires are surely Divine hints of what is in the plan of the future."

Dogs, horses, flowers, cows, music, poetry, prayer, she swept into what she was saying, with her hesitating "I think" to introduce them, and kept out Bishops, Priests, Deacons, Dogmatic Theology & Co. She took the universe with its problems into her queenly fingers, and simplified them as if she were putting together a puzzle she was well accustomed to.

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Here is a person who as nearly becomes the people she is nearest, by entering into their difficulties and seeing their burdens, as is possible without ceasing to exist altogether ; if for a moment you had heard the convincing music of her voice it would have been a solace for your remaining days.

When the stately noblewoman rose, she put her hands on Miss Ronnell's shoulders, and kissed her on the brow and on both cheeks, declaring herself in better heart than she had been for months. To me she had been the Angel who came to my Pool of Siloam : I was up to the neck in it, trembling with the fever of that vile contact still ; that note of certainty running all through her rapid Italian troubled my pool and brought healing at the time.



Alas, it passes, and I am sore. No one was ever with my mother and father without feeling that marriage may be a perpetual sacrament. Their love lifted up every one about them.

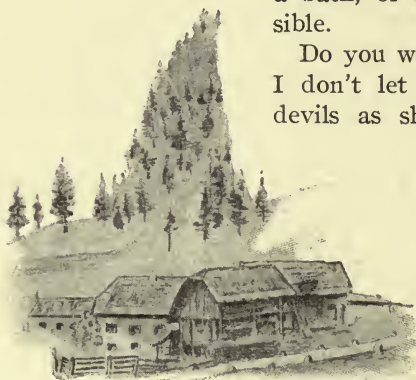
Lois and I have kept the very words Love and Marriage in a special little tabernacle because of them, and brought them out only under rarest circumstances, so you can see what this means—that sordid woman hovering about Miss Ronnell as if she were so much carrion.

The idea has never entered my thoughts. No one ever roused so entire an admiration as she has, but between us hangs a veil which makes absolute contact

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impossible, yet through it I see what I have told you—it is an abysmal day to have lived through !

To-morrow is again to-day, the latter mixing its first sepias with the yellows of my candle ; and as five hours hence we escape, I had better be busying myself about a bath, or a pipe, or something sensible.



Do you wonder why I mind ? why I don't let her have as many bed devils as she likes, and forget her existence ? There is the irony of it—when any one, even this sort, gets a lien on your youth, she sticks to something in you like a limpet.

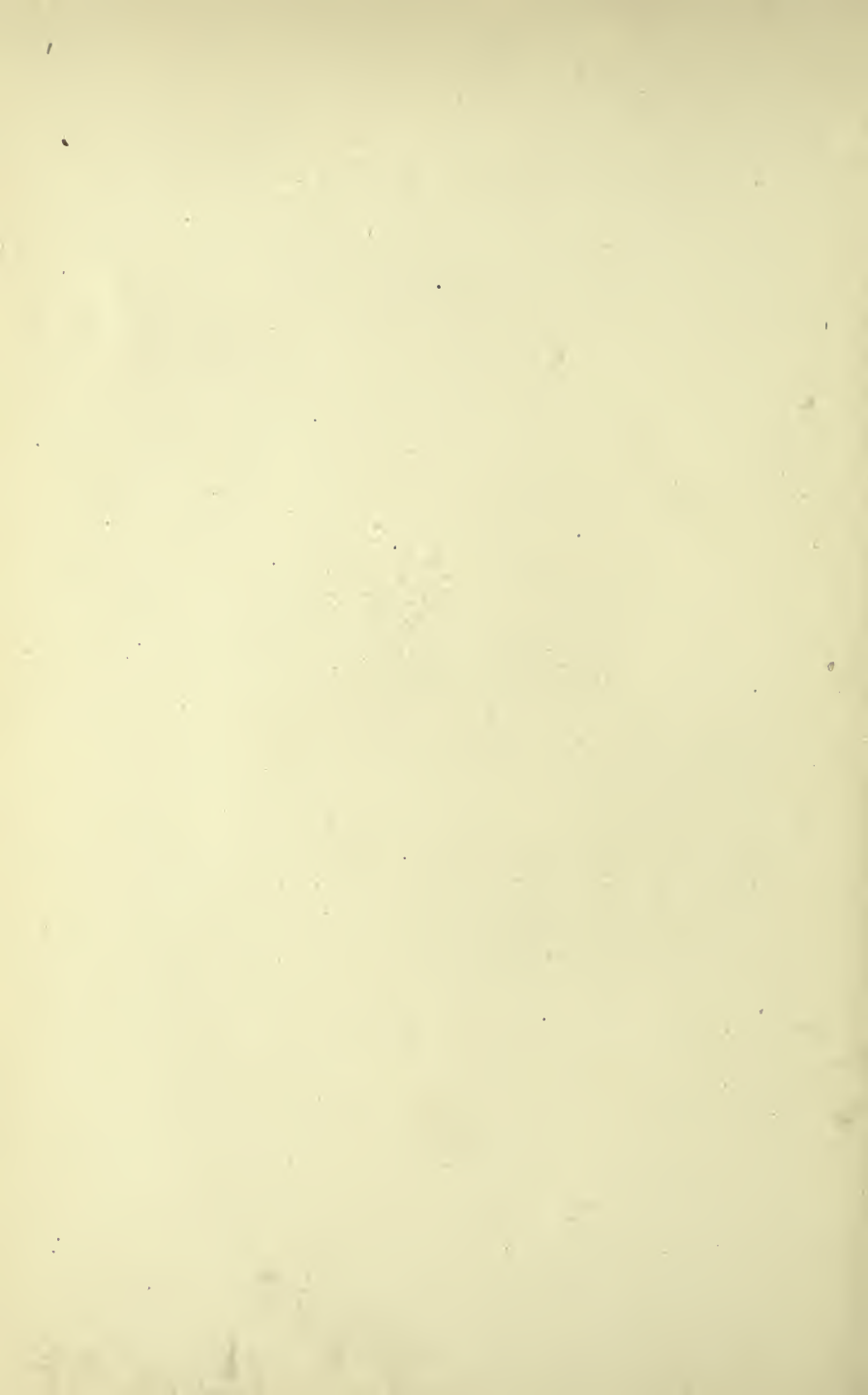
P.S.—I forgot your letter. I don't like it.

“ Less about the girl who has obsessed you, and more about the land.” Cold, disinterested brute, you. I have not mentioned her name more than three times as far as I recollect, and I have hurled scenery at you by the square mile. You shall have no more of her, but you might have said something more friendly.

There isn't much of the Angel about you.

SHED ON SUMMIT
OF PORDOI PASS





SHED ON SUMMIT OF PORDOI PASS

XXII

MISS RONNELL was never so alluring——

Gemini ! you asked for—— Well, Lois was never more woodenly inscrutable, and I have had to walk endless miles with her.

The only subject on which she would talk is the one



you bar, and she wanted it all from my end, like a monkey expecting to be fed on my nuts. I have my suspicions of Lois, and am still black and blue at the soul of me, considering—— Oh, you want scenery ! Well :—

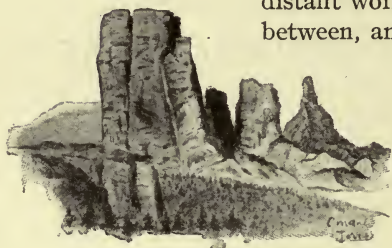
From the top of the Falzarego Pass the contrast of right side and left is as that between the dignified old Emperor Franz Josef and a party of his raw recruits after a too complete repression of thirst.

The sketches interpret both. Tofana wears the crown

JOY OF TYROL,

of sorrow royally. The Five Towers topple with careless merriment.

Looking over her shoulder I felt what fascinates a child, when patch after patch of a distant world is called across the chasm between, and set down within reach of



its hands; for a moment also I forgot everything else except the Sextener Dolomites and her soft brown hair between my fing— No, you want to hear about the silly land:

Take a full-sized flower-pot with broken rim, fill it with powdered sugar, set it among a crowd of terra-cotta productions, also sugar-sprinkled, and multiply your toy ten-millionfold—you can have miniature Dolomites on your study floor if you employ a first-rate magnifying glass.

It possibly might lack some of the feeling, but you are superior to feeling, so that would not matter.

To myself, feeling is the whole joy of life. By the authority of my nostrils, for example, I am prepared to set the scent of stewing pine-trees against any recognized odour in the world. By the authority of my reason I am convinced



SLED ON SUMMIT OF PORDOI PASS

also that a four-sided figure may be not less offensive than a triangle, but to you this is just a feeling. Jelly-fish, if you like, I am all feelers.

Within sight of Pieve di Livinalonga, from a perfervid bit of road, the previous picture was made, of the midday heat and the Sella dado along the sky.

Music is in the names here. Monte Civetta, Sasso Bianco, Becco di Mezzodi, sing their way into you. When one is with them it is not possible to imagine them by any other name, for each fits like a glove—pace Juliet Capulet.

In a flimsy shed for passing travellers I scribble.

We have dined—*i.e.*
eaten food.



The girls are strolling arm-in-arm.

Ronnell is making smoke on the grass with his knees heavenward.

I am wasting the time you will spend three days hence in reading this or burning it.

Our bedrooms are over a wooden stable; we enter them by an outside stair straight from the Night, into which we shall put out our boots. Here is the restaurant of our hotel sketched by—I beg your pardon.

JOY OF TYROL

My pretty memories :

(i) Cortina, three miles beneath our morning path, a pale baby, on a green cushion, in a cradle of rock.

(ii) Lion couchant above it, Tofana.

(iii) Gigantic yellow chrysanthemum far up in the southern sky, Civetta.

(iv) Curling grey ribbon of road coming out of the mist below to where I sit "like some great thought threading a dream."

(v) That beautiful creature—— No.

(vi) That image of cold cement which the Universities have special facilities for producing, and proudly heave on to the pedestals of Fellowships.

P.S.—These wooden walls be mighty chilly.

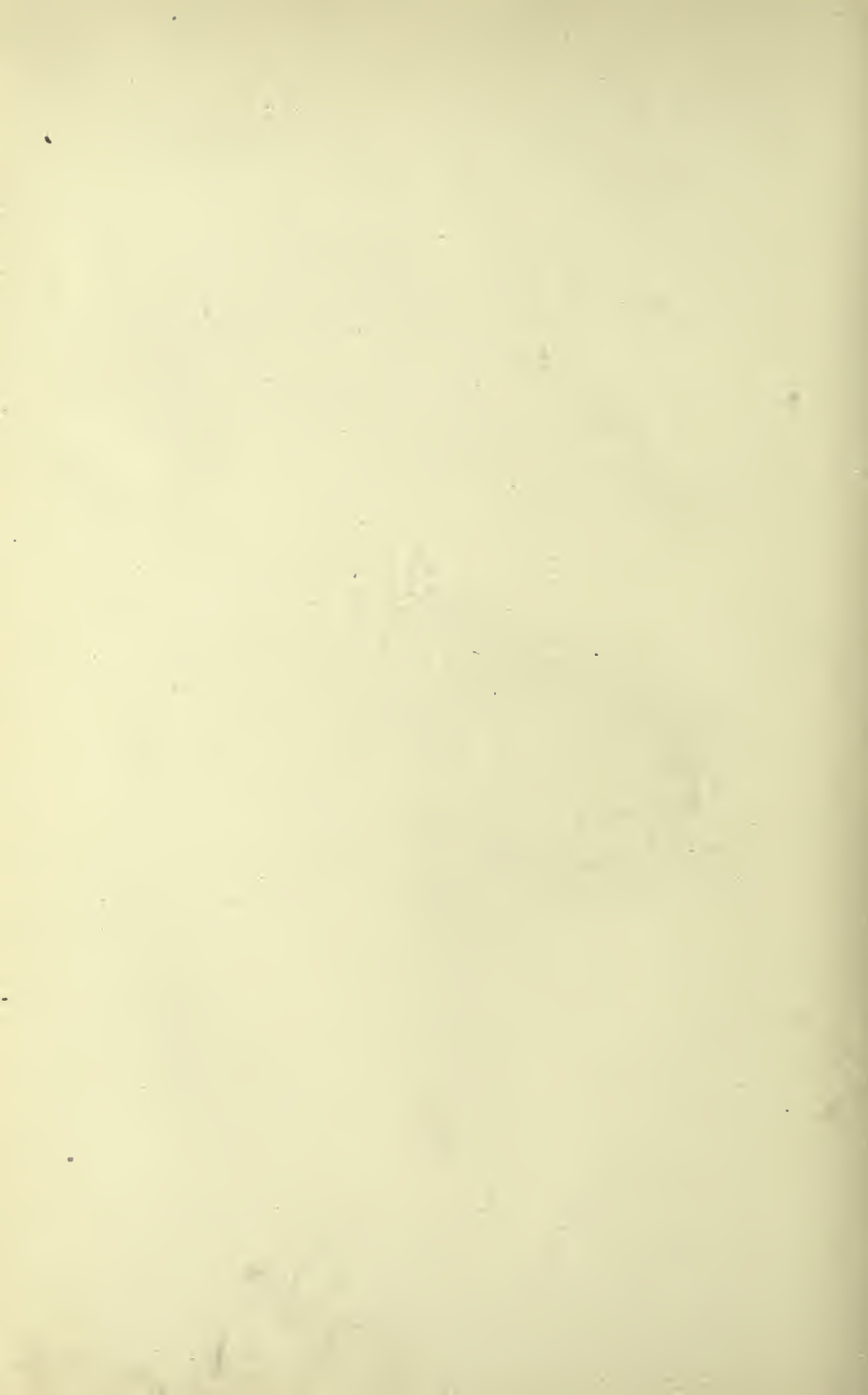
I have flicked through Lois' open window a note :
"Ronnell keen to talk with you alone."

Lois is a nice girl. No doubt he is.

Scenery enough, Sir Churl ?

PREDAZZO, VAL FIEMME





PREDAZZO, VAL FIEMME

XXIII

THE friendly stars watched us through chinks in the roof, till dawn touched our curled petals and we woke. Lois, even at 7,000 feet, is not above a hint, and within five minutes of the shed, with our feet on edelweiss soft as a cloud, we were alone.

Myrrh and frankincense—— No, before I proceed, be good enough to take your demands for scenery and hang them on the railings of the Fellows' Garden. They may attract attention—there.

How can you get what is best in Nature save through a woman's eyes?



Pretty Grecian to misunderstand the dear old lady!

All the way down grim, mighty Langkofel dominated us, its jaw and snarling teeth holding a chunk of sky with vigour of brute hunger, defiant of the decencies of Heaven, and so reminiscent of my aunt I should have said one or two home truths to it but for Miss Ronnell.

She was on her top gear. I touched the button where she left off at Auronzo; she did the rest.

Her aunts, ravenous for "souls," live to convert people to a certain statement of creed, in which, according to them, salvation is found. Of a thousand possible

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ideas, to them it only is important. They live night and day for it, and these pathetic old maids are immovably convinced that it is laid on them to introduce it to a decaying world as the Divinely appointed restorative.

It leaves their hands the most unattractive dogma ever put together ; nevertheless they have shaped their whole life to getting it into other people's minds, and their weird earnestness has infected their niece in ways unexpected.



To her Faith is something which lifts up the whole of life, enlarges, glorifies it ; she talked of Eastern religions, gave me translations of her own from Hindu sacred books, and was swinging—like an acrobat on a trapeze—from Buddha to Confucius, and from Pythagoras to the

Fourth Gospel, when Lois and her brother overtook us at the village of Canazei.

At Campitello, the next village, sketched above, we watched a game of bowls in which the men of the parish and their priest were engaged, this being a festival, the camaraderie of which priest and his skill were delightful.

Ronnell wrote in his scrawling hand on his sister's block : " Carnegie . millionaire . and . flinger . of . libraries . Stop . it . Endow . chairs . of . sport . at . Theological . Colleges . Teach . young . parsons . how . to shoot . shy . bowl . and . play . games . with . credit . to Faith . Better . investment ."

When she found it she declared that the fact of the

PREDAZZO, VAL, FIEMME

priest being "a ripping chap" was no excuse for wasting good paper.

Among a multitude of things it is too late to begin on now, she said this morning that to the majority of people the Church is only a given number of millions of tons of stone and timber, a mass of paper containing the more or less inaccurate shots of scholars, and billions of cubic feet of wind, words, and arguments; that what really matters is the Kingdom of God, and frequently the Church has drifted away from it.

The wheels of her chariot have sharp blades to them, and if I did not watch her face this sort of thing would seem sheer frivolity, but she means it seriously.

To Vigo di Fasso by diligence was funny going, we four in the coupé, six tourists from the Fatherland behind; we questioning driver concerning many things, they chatting in gutturals concerning two—the price of food and its merit in Tyrolese inns, expressing their memories by spluttering sounds, as if frying their tongues in oil.

At one point you might have heard this:

Driver: "Ecco Fontanazzo, Signori."

Voice behind: "Divine pig's liver."

Driver: "Ecco Val Monzone; bellissimo prospecto."

Voice behind: "Two noble blood sausages, 35 hellers."

A bitter irony that it is not this kind that is born dumb, for the dumb be gentle creatures who, having thanked God for their food, turn it over afterwards, if at all, without offence.

The driver was worth the cigars he got—chattered of his horses, wife, three babies, life in general, and travellers in particular, as if they were all the same thing; pulled up at every pillar-box, opened it with an immense key, and stuffed the letters into a capacious

JOY OF TYROL

trouser pocket—wherein, by the way, I lodged my last night's epistle!

A disgorgement of little girls from a village school produced an epigram from Ronnell: "When they have hair enough to put into a knot, up it goes, and down come their skirts, and a girl of seven is a dignified old woman."

Vide my own masterpiece:

Signor Tomaso Carlyle, up from thy grave and look at that. Her boots hold a pound of iron in their soles, her skirt has cloth in it to make a tribe of savages respectable, her apron alone would make a flag

for a nation, and her button of screwed hair would not fill the bowl of thy cutty pipe! Philosopher of clothes, your turn.

Never a growl! I call that unmannerly of him.

Miss Ronnell can be something of a limb. Coming into Vigo the road was steep; we got out; not so people behind; it was heavy for the horses. "The brutes must get out," said the gentlest soul on earth—and made them! One after another did those flabby tourists, by the help of her firm right hand, descend on to the road, while the diligence moved slowly on. I warned her of international complications. Her defence was characteristic: "I couldn't see the horses steaming and straining, while those creatures sat on with cheeks dropping fatness; besides, I said nothing nasty; I only mentioned their avoirdupois with a smile."

At Vigo we discovered what may be hidden under the name of coffee, and Ronnell wrote out a telegram about it to the Minister of the Interior.

Plenteous rare dead things lie in the rocks here, the

PREDAZZO, VAL FIEMME

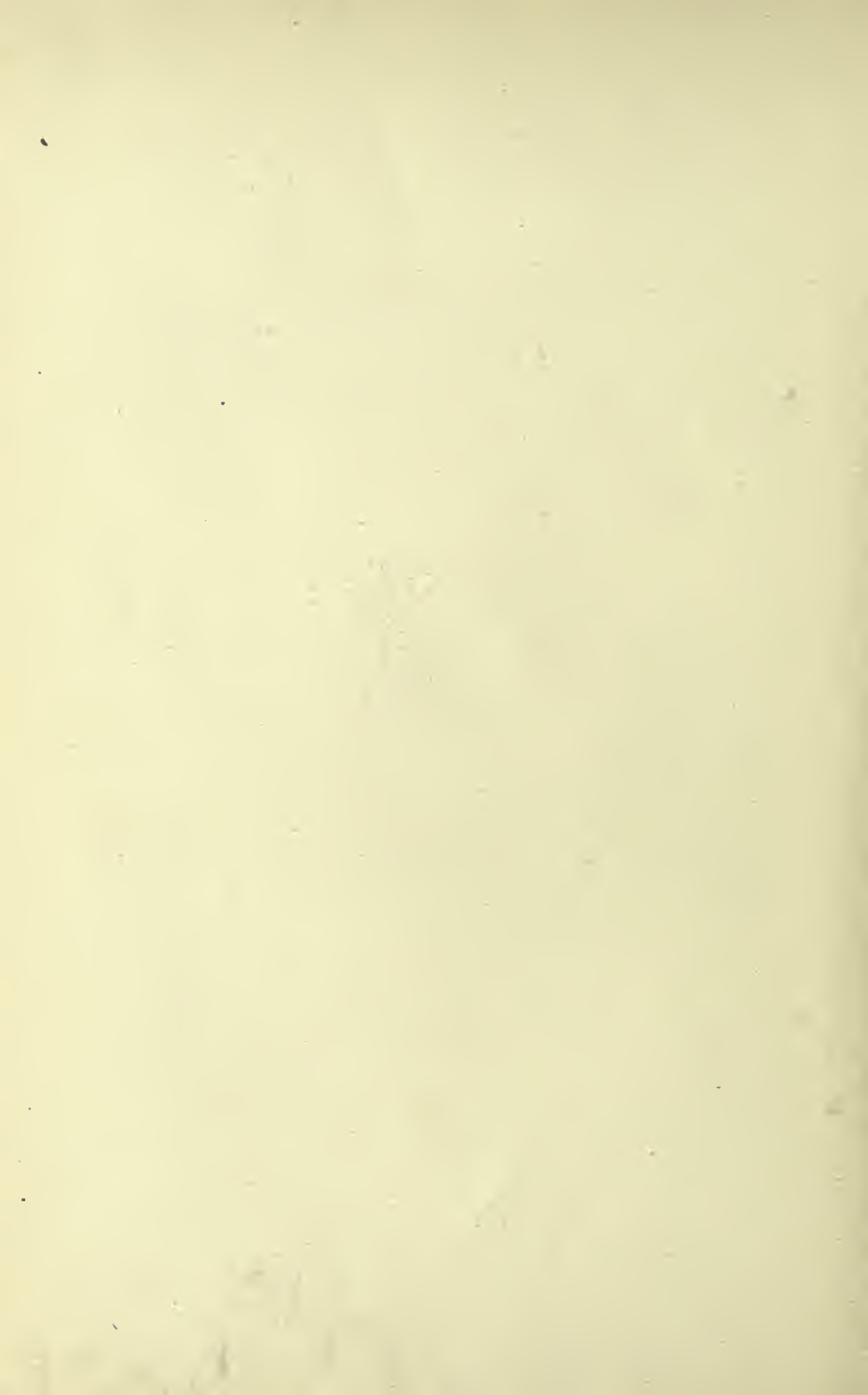
strangers' book is sprinkled with names of geological swells, but better is one rare live thing than—— No, that is bathos ; you might have said it yourself with an effort. Better is one live girl than a million mummies.

She was rippling with fun this evening—handed me a pamphlet in German of which 5,000 copies came to her at Cortina, the crudest translation of the one she got at Sterzing. A smaller woman would have gurgled over the language ; she only played upon it as upon a thing serious in the eyes of children. But when she let out what she felt of time and money wasted in meddling with views of others as certainly Christians as themselves, her brother looked more serious than I have seen him ; and when she looked at him and said, " Christianity is not a theory, it's a life," he astonished me by answering, " Quite right, old girl ; the mischief is so many people drop the *f*."

Mio Letto ; bellissimo prospetto.

RADEIN, NEAR
THE STARS





RADEIN, NEAR THE STARS.

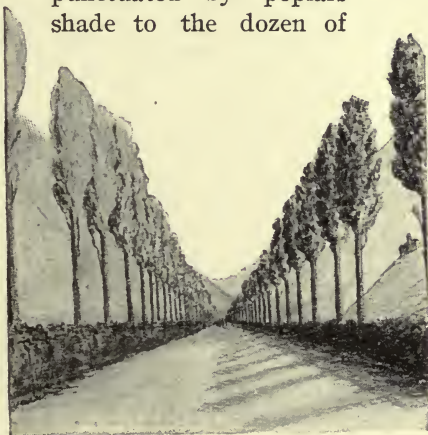
XXIV

PERMIT me, remote sir, to call your attention to this sketch. It speaks many morning miles, when, after a league of dewy meadows, we found ourselves on a white road with no turning, with barely a half-yard's punctuated by poplars shade to the dozen of them.

Cabs were not, walk we had to, and three separate times succumbed before the glare, once into an Eagle, once into a Dove, once into a Golden Lamb; we would have gone into a Pig and Whistled if we had come on it. Yet through it all she never turned a hair.

Frame her in conditions of opulence removed from exigencies which ruffle you and me, then turn suddenly to a girl sprinting along through drought like unto the dry desert, jolly as a humming-bird—same person!

Yes, it was a big thing in thirsts, long as the throat of a giraffe and anxious as of those consciously evaporating; it would be a salutary exercise if by any means I could convey to you the feeling of it—of the word "hot."



JOY OF TYROL

Warm—a Turkish bath, a faux pas can do. “Hot”—no! Why, every pore of you can boil and bubble like Mars, you can reach a point when there remains but one dry spot for which you crave the charity of liquid, your parched, shrivelled tongue. Then you are “hot,” as we were when we trickled into Cavalese.

When the heat began Ronnell insisted on walking abreast “because it’s easier to stand heat in a crowd,” but I had two jolly hours with her before that, in which we talked of likes and dislikes, affinities and antipathies. A large-hearted perceptiveness sparkled upon every word she spoke: every baby a closed casket of possibilities, disposition, faculties, and tendencies, the things people imagine to be most absolutely their own, yet every one of them lying waiting to be let out; the kindness it would be to tattoo abnormal people’s brows with SHY, RUDE, NERVOUS, PROUD, LAZY, NOBLE, CRIMINAL, that others should have a hint, and so be prepared to give them a chance by neither over- or under-estimating them; the folly of appraising character by what can no more be helped than a marmoset its eyebrows or a gentleman his nails; the charity which is a noble kind of knowledge, the work of the heart getting a grasp of human limitations, lack of pity and sympathy being always the result of ignorance; the human differences far wider than canine, yet no one would kick a terrier for not being a deerhound.

But you can’t have a verbatim report to-night; you shall have it when we meet; I will not forget. She is the most kindly Christian philosopher whose warm heart was ever controlled by a cool head.

It is an extraordinary thing that her power of getting whatever she wants has made her neither imperious nor selfish. When we were ready to go, our Cavalese landlord declared he had no carriage, and she took him in

RADEIN, NEAR THE STARS

hand and worked him, like a box of sardines under a tin-opener ; said " What a pity ! " while she was slinging her rucksack on to her shoulders. " I am so sorry ; we are to be at Radein before dark, and our walk here was warm. We English people love your beautiful land. Addio."

It was like a benediction, sweet and sincere, and he did not let us go till from some mysterious background an excellent carriage rattled up.

" Ecco, Signori," he bowed, like a conjurer who had produced it from his hat, and as we got in kissed her gloved hand.

" Self-help by Smiles," chuckled the chuckler.

Physically I am 5,000 feet nearer Heaven than you ; I feel it in my calves from the climb, but in my soul I feel a long way from regions of bliss.

I got hold of Lois this evening, and told her about my interview at Cortina.

She was sympathetic, trembled with indignation, wiped her eyes, blew her nose, ground her teeth, and made open confession of her wish of years, that I should feel the influence of her " unique Marsalys."

I was as frank as I am with you, admitted the immense pleasure I was having in her friendship, and my admiration for her character ; but the moment I began on my future work, and said I wanted a long talk about all sorts of schemes in which only a woman could help me, she became stupidly inconsequent and asked whom I meant !

To " Yourself, of course," she replied by blobbing her eyes in her damp handkerchief and sobbing that " she was a silly fool, and I was a darling old donkey."

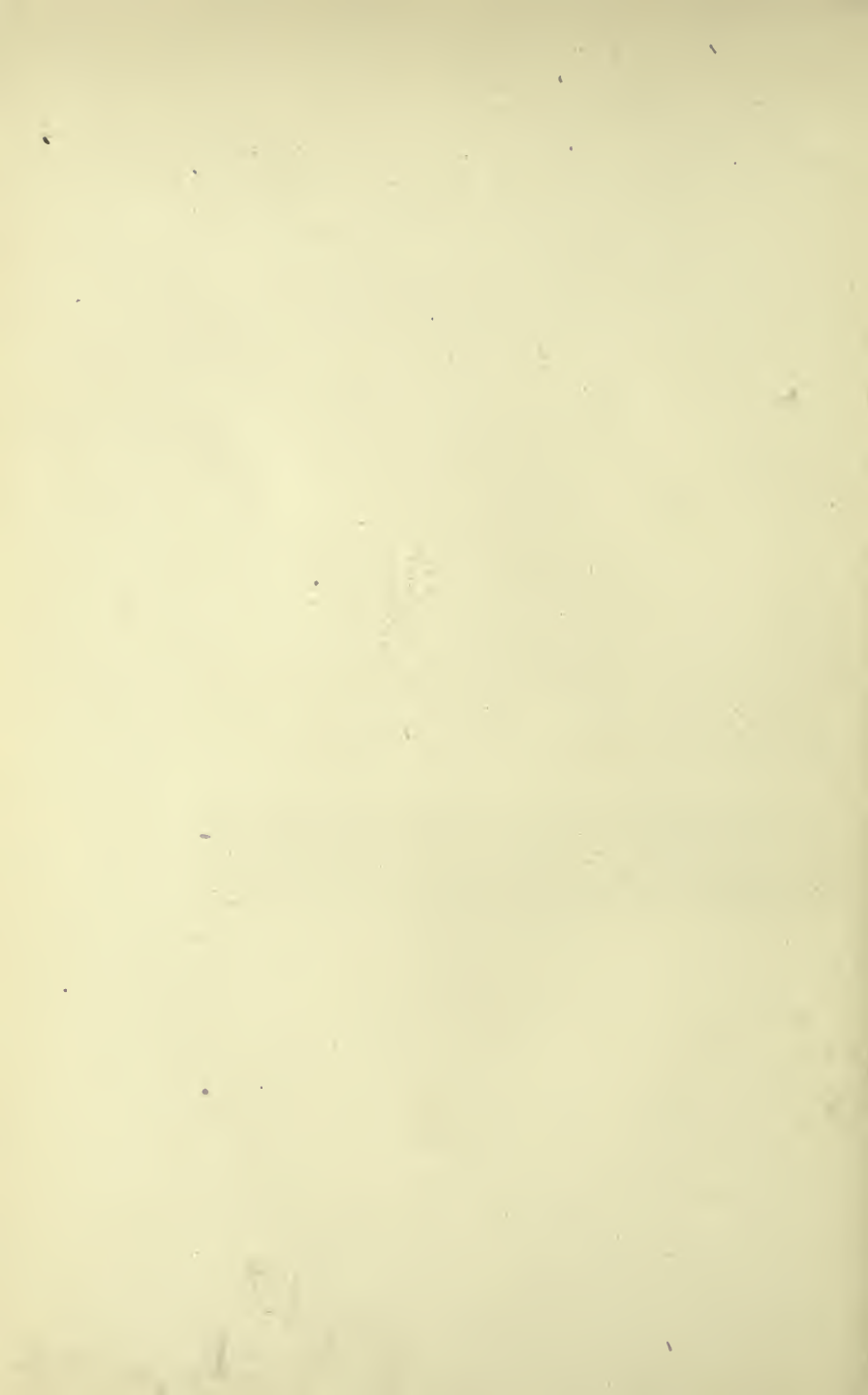
Thank God there's a sane woman about.

P.S.—I can distinctly hear the stars whispering to each other some sibilant word.



BIRCHABRÜCK,
IN-EGGENTHAL



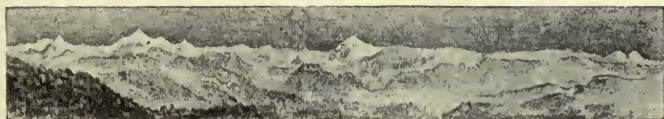


BIRCHABRUCK-IN-EGGENTHAL

XXV

If, instead of common dust, an afflatus from on high had settled on me, I should let you on to a vision the very memory of which makes my head buzz.

It was soon after the sun had broken into the day; we were on a path shaded by beech and pine trees, between whose gaps we saw it. The valley was veiled



like a bride, and mist girdled the mountains' loins; but on high the clouds lay in wide sheets, soaked in reflections from the sky, like an expanse of sea adrift at 10,000 feet above its proper level; and in this sea the peaks of Adamello and Presanella, and the white cone of Ortler, sat and looked about them as much like islands in pale blue water as anything outside fairyland.

It was for this angel-archipelago the afflatus would have come in handy.

Try and picture it: sea and sky in fellowship, islands far away from home, in an ocean of water indeed, but water so thinly drawn out that a puff of wind would lay it aside.

There are things one expects, and when they appear

JOY OF TYROL

they overtop one's expectations, but here was something topsy-turvy, supernatural—what you will—it did not surprise us ; it bewildered, perplexed, filled us with an uncomfortable fear that some cosmic change was passing over our globe—and ended by lifting us to an unlimited optimism, that anything could be so grand and so un-earthly.

This is not what O'Brian calls "foine writhing"—it is as accurate as I am capable of making it—but we came near writhing at the pass when we saw of a

sudden the grey fingers of Latemar held up in gigantic supplication. The grass sparkled with every colour of the spectrum ; upon her face rested a strangely beautiful look of illumination, one might say that it shone. I allowed myself to quote :



"A Jacob's ladder falls on gleaming grass,
And o'er the mountain walls young angels
pass" ;

but Ronnell wouldn't let it pass, said Tennyson ought to have known that angels are all male, and far too superior to have ever been young.

He was better after breakfast at the Alpine hut.

In the dry heat of noon we came on a solitary inn surrounded by boggy, unfertile land. We went in. She handled the proprietress as if she were a siphon, and brought forth a steady rush of autobiography—a desert life in a solitude of two.

When snow lies on the Rectory path I shall think of her up there with winter storms and dumb white mountains, where I have the din and dust of the city ; living

BIRCHABRUCK-IN-EGGENTHAL

there, mark you, because of chance travellers to Italy, who might be buried in the drifts if no refuge were open.

It is the cream of human kindness ; the takings of the whole winter would not keep a goat alive, but, as she said, " Some one must do it, and God has been very good to me, so I do this for Him."

She was a young, delicate-looking woman, and lives with her aunt, and—without comment let me write it—I distinctly heard Miss Ronnell say as she left " May God be always very good to you, dear," and then I think she kissed her.

We began dinner out of doors ; a storm which set everything rattling drove us in.

I asked the waitress why the church bells ring so furiously during thunder.

She said it was a warning to the villagers to shut their windows.

I. " But they always keep them shut ! "

She. " Yes, they do. It is really to wake any one who is asleep."

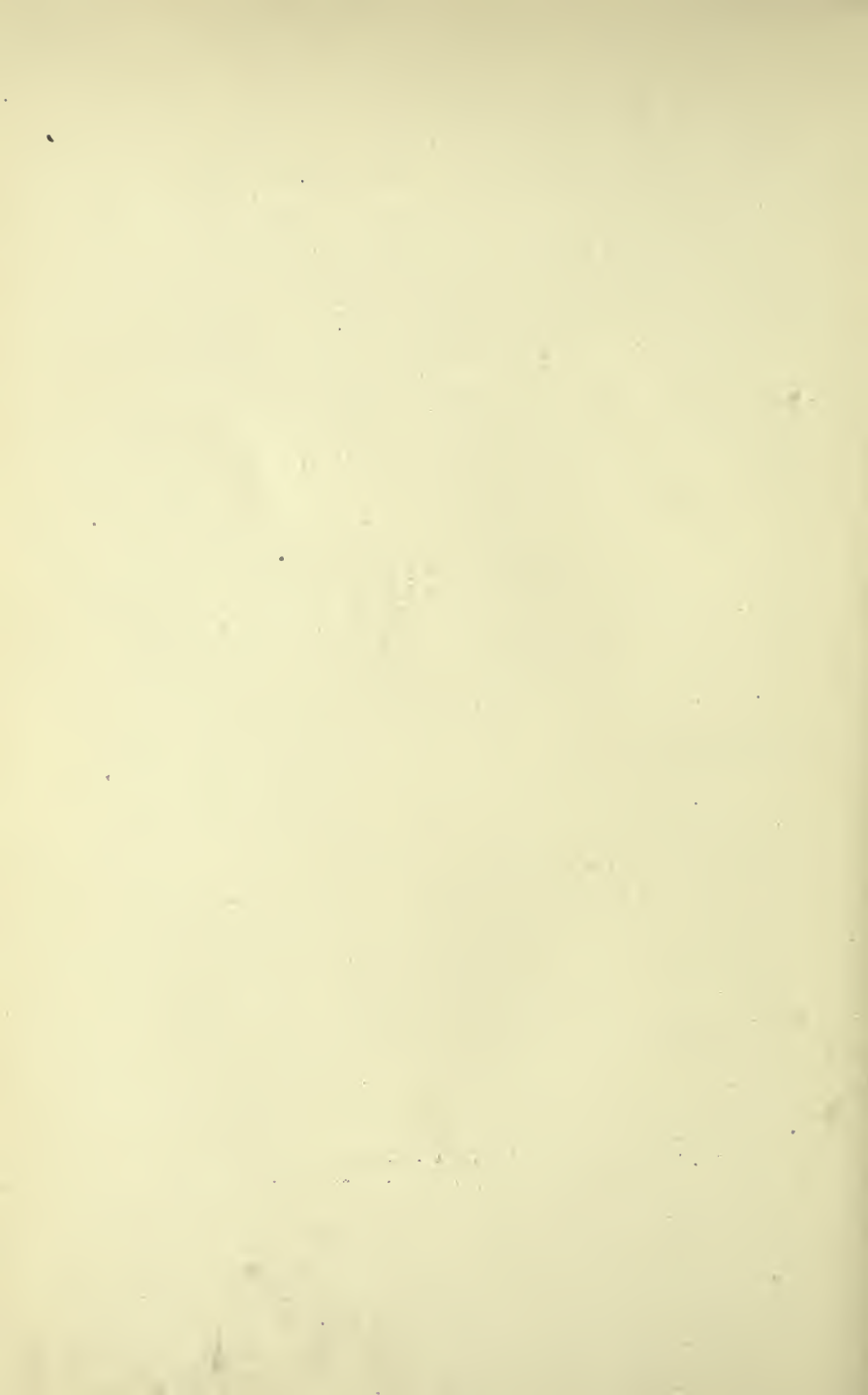
I. " Do you think any bell is half so likely to wake them as the thunder itself ? "

She. " No. But it rings to remind them to take in their pot-plants if they have any outside."

I could have kept her at it for hours and got no nearer ; but the lady said to me later, she thought it might be a wise plan of the Church to make people associate storms with God, lest they should think peace and sunshine were His only ideas. She—— I am a dull dog, that storm got into my skull.

" Peace after war,
Port after stormy seas."

Quite so, but after a long walk like this,
Do details greatly please ?



WELSCHNOFEN





WELSCHNOFEN

XXVI

GOT here early, and spent morning in sweetly doing nothing, lying on "Mother Nature's lap," letting the sunshine in, and communing with my own heart—a very dangerous companionship for a weak personality, and like to corrupt my manners if I did it often.

The clean goodness of another person incarnates ideals, shows what they mean in visible form ; one loses hope, curses one's luck, asks who is responsible for the flabby, unreliable creature who strolls about wearing one's own name and calling itself me, while all the time one can picture a wholly different, an admirable me.

D.G., there's lunch.

There has come over Miss Ronnell a most uncomfortable gloom, shot at intervals with feverish excitement. I noticed it a little yesterday ; to-day it flung itself about. We had half an hour together ; she riddled me with inquiries about Bozen's postal communication with England, the time letters take to get there, etc., behaved in fact like the fidgety heroine in a tragedy waiting for news from her hesitating young man.

It gave me a shock from which I am not yet recovered. I sit alone and wonder——

Possessed though I be of a sore head, I present you nevertheless with the following :



Karee-see.
Tyrol.

Imprimis.—Karer-see, of which she has done a funny-looking black-and-white, the blots and poles representing pine-trees !

Mother Earth is a quiet old lady, but she has her vanities, and a pretty taste in jewels is one of them. Tyrol being her neck, she hangs on it what she values most, and calls it not emerald, turquoise, nor aquamarine, but Karer—by which she puns on darling—and, to give honour where it is due, she is right.

As the eye-feathers of a peacock's tail among colours are the ripples of this lake among liquids. As a sapphire lying among grass, catching the glance of Heaven, so dwelleth this thing in communion with the sky—yes, and Latemar's crags look down in love and give their shadows holiday upon it.

Secundo.—As is this magic mirror among the miracles, so among women I had thought— No, as a nettle among your carnations in the Fellows' plot is this effusion among the correspondence of the level-headed.

Oh, *Tertium quid*.—This silhouette, which Ronnell calls a silly 'at.

As parsons are referred to as sexless—"My lord, ladies and gentlemen, *and* clergy"—so was this apparition.

It passed our window three times. We debated it. I bet Lois an ice-cream at Bozen if it was male, Ronnell promised his sister a nice scream of unlimited profanity if it proved female.

She came into our inn a few minutes ago, and is now drinking a glass of beer in the peasants' room !



JOY OF TYROL

Ronnell went to bed half an hour ago, so needless blasphemy is preserved in sleep.

His sister was—— Lois is an inefficient manageress of a small circus. The animals don't jump through the hoops she holds up.

I am in no humour.

Good night and good gracious to you.

BOZEN



BOZEN

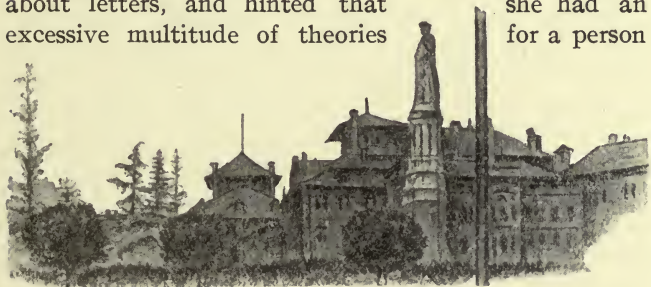
XXVII

I HAVE entertained a tempest in my soul.

A little of it, with the quietest of eventides to help,
I will hand on.

The sunset is ripe lemon, the profile of what we see
against it is coming to make your mouth water.

I walked with Lois. I spoke of Miss Ronnell's anxiety
about letters, and hinted that she had an
excessive multitude of theories for a person



leading a fruitless life ; it set fire to a bomb which
almost distributed me. Pleased, Lois purrs prettily ;
roused, with the lid off, Vesuvius is a mere squib to
her. In an hour she told me more than I should have
guessed in a lifetime, and every word added to this
fine woman's praise.

In a word, she has devoted the last five years to the
study of Religions, made herself familiar with a good
deal of the Eastern sacred literature, and learnt Hindu-
stanee ; and as a result has offered herself to the Society

JOY OF TYROL

for the Propagation of Christianity in India, and expects a letter here from their Committee either accepting or refusing her.

It occurs to me that you might kindly burn my last night's letter. I was feeling chippy, and may have written something critical, which I cannot recall; but burn it.

She is sketching at the next table, the electric light dancing on her beautiful brown hair. Having met the Committee, I should count the matter settled: five minutes of her voice would persuade the Royal Society to give her a Fellowship if she wanted it, or the King to make her a Privy Councillor; nevertheless the S.P.C.I. are an unaccountable people.

No doubt it is this consciousness of having a "mission"—that very word I dared to ridicule—which has made her so openly friendly; she has regarded me simply as a person who has found his niche. I see it now clearly!

The way Lois described things was not lacking in humour.

Months ago, it appears, she offered to go at her own expense to any work they liked to put her to, had a stirring time with the Committee, to whose cut-and-dried questions she replied, as you may imagine, in unexpected ways, so that for hours they made long faces over her optimistic Theology—on every point of which she floored them with texts—and ended by a confession of fear lest her influence on the other missionaries should be unsettling, and postponed any decision until a meeting which would take place *this week*.

After that she interviewed the Chairman alone, and before she finished had turned the old gentleman inside out—had made him grant that the Hindu is no more a heathen, in our superior sense, than he or she, and

BOZEN

that to approach an already deeply religious people with such foregone prejudice was to deny the Omnipotence of the Creator, and to be blind to the primary fact of His love, etc. ; at the end of all which pleading, the hoary crank came round completely and promised her his warm support.

It's the chance of a century, a girl like this offering mind, body, and estate to them ; and if they refuse her—no, that's impossible.

Is it not well nigh superhuman that, with her future in the balances, until yesterday there has never been a sign of excitement or anxiety ?

None but a splendid nature is sufficient—— My pen runs away.

Thanks for letter. I knew you would be interested in this abundantly alive person, and so disregarded orders.

She sends a twist of this afternoon's road, which gives her skill in getting at the spirit of a place—the Schlucht—regardless of a man's tonsils if he wishes to pronounce it.

Bozen is more beautiful than ever ; once, on her way from Venice, she was here, and has it among her " Cities of Refuge," to which she flies in fancy, from dirty, grey, English days.

I would give quite a lot to have you beside me, beneath these stars, to complete it all and bring the support I need.



JOY OF TYROL

My bedroom has a "wide East-window of the soul's surprise," on to the garden of a Princess whose father—bless him—had an intelligent mania for collecting flowering trees, and as I tidied up for dinner I saw the full red glory of the Rosengarten over my looking-glass.

Whichever way one looks, outlines of roof, mountain, or spire make witchery of contrast with the sky and——

A titled magnate interrupted me here, and after introductions, salutations, heel-clickings, and Austrian civilities extracted a promise that we will dine with him at noon to-morrow.

By my watch it seems to be but nine, yet fleecy mists are gathering in my brain. No, I will set down our commissariat record :

5 *a.m.*—Breakfast of meagre rolls and coffee.

9 *a.m.*—An emergency trout. Viertel of white wine.

Noon.—What Ronnell calls "Swipes" and a roll.

2 *p.m.*—A sort of lunch—cost 5*d.* each.

7 *p.m.*—A more than sufficient dinner.

Yes, the purple night looks on at least one man who is prepared to admit the impeachment of drowsiness, but that little head is still in perfect command of itself, and if she can sketch I ought to be able to write, and I will write. "Ja, Fräulein! noch ein schwarzen bitte"—that will keep me awake. So!

What catches one here is that the silhouette of man's buildings, which is generally an impertinence, is so delightful: Art, Nature, and grace in harmony; it reduces one to the level of the person whose vocabulary "isn't equal to it."

The effect of the coffee has withered away. Sixty seconds ago I thought I could—— No, I can do this for you from memory:

At the inn where we consumed trout, there was in the visitors' book a rhyming screed from the pen of a

BOZEN

Berliner, with line-endings equivalent to trout, bout, fish, dish, snack and whack, whose Muse dealt solely in the memory of food.

On the page opposite a blank space tempted Ronnell and he fell :

“ Any quite overeaten ass
May deem himself—supreme a poet :
Whiles only as an ass is he supreme,
And probably will never know it.”

There, in the Fremdenbuch of that little inn, stands the record of his fall for ever.

The lady has given me her drawings and gone in search of the soft benefits of sleep ; the others have also gone ; one line, and I follow.

Since you confess interest in her, I want to say emphatically that paper is a treacherous medium through which to convey impressions of such a personality—not because it is complex, but because it is so simple.

I have given snatches of her conversation, not a suggestion of the mental atmosphere I have felt when we have been alone.

If I were a brighter person I possibly might——

Principalities and Powers ! why did I sit on ? That egregious aunt's companion sidled up like a gipsy five minutes ago to tell me that “Her ladyship is at the Hotel Splendid, and is anxious to see me at noon to-morrow.”

Termagant ! Loose on Bozen ! Why ?

What in Fire and Brimstone is she after ?

I was bitterly glad to be able to say that it would not be possible to give myself the pleasure.

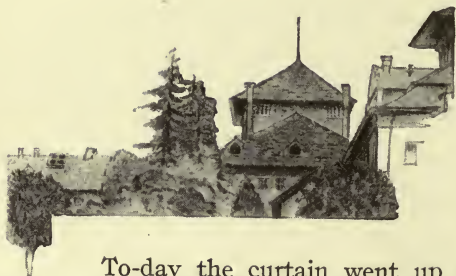
Surely a lethal chamber is the only suitable way out for such.

I had forgotten her unnecessary existence—the fiend.

JOY OF TYROL

XXVIII

BOZEN.



A mighty effort has kept my memory free of that direful woman until now, when a letter from her lies before me unopened. I shall let it lie.

To-day the curtain went up on an argument over the necessity of ham and eggs for breakfast. We like "fleshpots" when we can get them, but our waitress was stolid.

This side the Straits of Dover they resent the notion of anything more sustaining than coffee and rolls—a meagre way of breaking one's fast—and considering that in France, with a north wind blowing, they must often get a whiff of our fish, bacon, or what not somewhere about 9 a.m., it ought to have inserted the meaning of breakfast on the coast, whence you might suppose it would have struck inland. Not a bit. Even among those obese people whose God is their—I mean who feel acutely the necessity of aliment, to whom west winds carry many remunerative ideas of things made in England, breakfast in our sense is unknown; and even here in blessed Tyrol one's heart plays the prize-fighter against one's ribs when one asks for substantial meats! But we got our "Hemmineggs."

This hour and more I have sat at the window thinking about the view, her, myself.

The view is "absolute," she would say. She is—well, I suppose she is off to India for the rest of her life; and I——?

BOZEN

God help me, I shall miss and mourn her as I never——
Time flies ; I must collect them for this dinner, and
that letter can cool itself.

5 *p.m.*—Her I found in the Laubengasse, in blazing
sun, finishing enclosed. The way she has caught
the overhanging per-
spectives is admir-
able for a girl who
has never had a
drawing lesson !

Ronnell, mumbling
something about the
“Corridors of Time,”
we overtook in the
arcade of which you
see the arches, and
Lois the eupeptic in
the fruit market,
engaged on a large
green fig.

Our entertainment
was elaborate but not
ostentatious.

The brother of our
host, a Major in their
crack Alpine regi-
ment, was there, making a party of six, and a capital
time we had.

Among other things we talked about Austrian titles.
Our simple English ways bewildered them. They could
not conceive it possible for social or political life to
endure for a day without them, and persisted that to
address the wife of a professional man as “Mrs.” instead
of “Mrs. Doctress” or “Mrs. Imperial-Over-Inspect-



JOY OF TYROL

oress " must be an insult to her husband and his profession. Even Miss Ronnell failed to defend our system against theirs.

A single set of titles they rattled off was a vocabulary in itself, each rank separated from the next like a chemist's drugs in bottles: for example, the precise distinction between Hofrat, Geheimrat, Justizrat, Baurat, Kaiserlicherrat, and Regierungsrat seemed simple and reasonable at the time, but now—nine hours later—I could not for the life of me tell the least difference between the lot.

In the drawing-room after dinner the men were distressed that the girls would not smoke their cigarettes, and from the disappointed way they besought them to "smoke their own if they preferred them," I am convinced they thought it simply a polite lie when they said they did not smoke, an Austrian non-smoker among ladies being exceptional.

Let me confess: these people beat us easily in manners; our slack, easy-going habits have no place here. On the other hand, they have no manner, only natural graces of breeding; but, poor chaps, if they imagine Miss Ronnell a typical English girl I hope they may never visit our shores! She talked little, but whenever she did she hit the bull's-eye, was never obvious or ordinary, was as fluent as they were, and fascinated them both by her sweet, keen spirit.

Yes, we had a good time, and afterwards went on, armed with an introduction, to the School of Handicraft. This country is, I deem, first among nations in its system of discovering children of artistic talent in the parish schools, and of training them in the wisest manner. This is *not* a repetition of what the Director said. I have seen it for myself in lace, copper, carvings, wall-patterns, etc., where you find campanula, alpen-

rose, thistle, and vine—things they see constantly—beautifully interpreted in designs as only those who have real pleasure in their work could produce.

In the school we noticed that the objects from which they work are chiefly local—flowers, pine-cones, butterflies, etc., familiar to them from babyhood; and some of the work we saw, done by quite young students, might be described, without exaggeration, as scholarly and reverent translation of the language of Nature into that of Art.

There be voices which compel overhearings, willy nilly. Three such have I in mind—two Transatlantic, one Scots :

(1) While we toyed with coffee-ices this afternoon, from the next table came nasal, inaccurate descriptions—such as would turn the hair of any ordinary liar white and brittle—of places so mixed up that a respectable map of Europe, if it had heard, would have committed suicide during temporary insanity; of people who had warned them what not to miss in the matter of pictures, towns, and churches, who must have been expert and heartless practical jokers, if what we heard was true; and of swindles by shopkeepers, waitresses, cabbies, and the rest of the population of what they called the “Arstreen Tirlle,” without a suspicion that they had not mastered the difference between the Kreutzer and the Krone, both of which are written Kr. for short, the one being worth 10*d.*, the other two-tenths of a penny.

(2) Happened at Cortina :

Wrinkled old mamma to coy but middle-aged daughter :

“Now, Carrie, dear girl, we got to have more boiling water for this tea; and as you’re the only one of us who’s got a tag of this washed-out, faded old language, ask for it right now.”

Carrie. “Hi, there, you! Acqua bollata, Signorina.”

JOY OF TYROL

Wrinkled O.M. "I guess she didn't quite get you, Carrie; order it again."

Carrie. "She got me right enough. I d'know what she's giggling about."

The waitress had giggled herself near to our table, and Lois whispered "bollente" to her; but to the end of her days Carrie will probably demand stamped water at Italian-speaking tea-shops, and wonder why the waitresses giggle.

(3) The Scots one is no staler than last night at dinner-time.

First Voice. "Fräulein, was ist Hirn?"

Second Voice. "The girrl is tapping her forehead."

Third Voice. "I fear she is hinting she considers us wanting."

I turned round to find three comfortable Scotswomen, and went to their rescue. "Hirn," I explained, meant brains, and recommended the dish; and as a reward for my help, I suppose, they let out that for three whole weeks they had subsisted heroically on coffee, bread, beer, and veal cutlets, as the names for these things were the only words they were quite certain about.

O Fortunatus natus to get such stories fresh!

Now for our second dinner. Ye gods! here is that still unopened letter. Later will do——

We have dined. Ronnell, after two dinners, declares he sees the German point of view exactly, and that three or four nocturnal beers—the limit of moderation here—would send him to bed with only one subject flooding his mind, the vital necessity of a fleet to defend the liquid part of his responsibilities!

Shall I tell you, learned Don, what we had for dinner? I cannot call to mind one single dish. I have read my aunt's effusion since, and it has wiped out my whole

past, everything I ever thought of or did or prayed for, liked or loathed, from my inception until this moment.

To transcribe it would be a relief. I will :

“ MY OWN DEAREST NEPHEW,

“ As I saw you were in *no* humour to listen to what (from my wide experience of the world) valuable advice I had at hand to give you, I have been moved by parental patience and kindness to travel here, at much inconvenience, to see you once again. So far as I could learn from her tone, I gather that your message to me, through Phipps, last night was truthful—hence I write what I had intended to say.

“ You, with your curate’s saintly blindness to the facts of life, perhaps regard me as an ignorant old woman. I am not so blind as you suppose.

“ I at least saw THIS when you dined with me at the Mirabella, that you are over head and ears IN—LOVE—with that charming Marsalys Ronnell, and I do not blame you.

“ But I put the question bluntly—do you know you are in love ? Do you realize that what you are feeling is what ought to end in marriage ?

“ If you do not you are an ineffable fool.

“ She is a woman in ten thousand. I never met any one—even at a Court function—with such a Presence ; and although you are at heart, I suspect, a *nincompoop*, your appearance is good, your family, thank God, will pass muster with credit, and—if you will only give up this slum folly, all might go well. You cannot expect a woman of her instincts to go to help you to convert charwomen !

“ One other thing I must add. I found out a great deal more from Lois than she suspected, about this heiress, one thing of which is, that she has—in a fit of depression, no doubt—offered to go and work in Africa,

JOY OF TYROL

or some impossible place, as a *typewriter* or something to the *Society for Whitewashing Negroes*, and I am indignant at *the very thought* of such a thing. I wish the Almighty had seen fit to give me a *sounder constitution*, as I might have been of *such great service* to my *Church* if He had ; but, my *darling nephew*, I now implore you to look facts in the face, to give up all your broad *charity* and *suchlike nonsense*, and cease to be *thoughtless, rash, and hot-headed*, and arrange an alliance with this *Marsalys Ronnell at once*, so as to secure *the advantages* which will accrue to you through so *wise and good* an action.

“ Remember I am in loco prientis.

“ Your *very affectionate Aunt*,

“ JULIENNE PURLEY CATERHAM.”

I have read it through three times. Now I have copied it out. I admit her the cleverest old demon who ever had running powers over earthly lines. It is unspeakably loathsome that she should have seen—what I did not.

Good night !

XXIX

BOZEN.

Before I turned in last night I stuffed that gross letter under Lois' door without comment, and this morning a note from her was pushed under mine : “ We must be away from here during the day. Breakfast at 7. Have looked up a walk in Baedeker.”

After a night without sleep the sound of her billet being shoved in at 5 a.m. was comforting.



BOZEN

A jolly dozen miles they seemed to think it, half gorge, half valley—not jolly to me—to a village, Sarntheim, which, like a fly in a bowl of salad, sits in cornfields.

It is such a private, family sort of region that we felt like interlopers until, severely parched, we turned into a Gasthaus, and had its freedom conferred upon us by the friendly landlady and a niece with eyes like butterflies.

We unchained our thirst, they their curiosity—it was like a fair! Neither of them had been farther afield than Bozen, or had even heard of England; and when we mentioned the sea, questions tumbled out one over the other. “Is it true that mothers let their babies go into it?” “Are they always drowned?” “Do they get them out with nets?”

“Do the big steamers often kill them?” and so on. It took Marsalys ten patient minutes to make plain that the sea is not a large cistern, which business she undertook like a serious teacher intent on making things clear, sitting in a wooden arm-chair with a tall glass of beer in her left hand, using her right for emphasis, the women standing in front with their hands behind their backs.

After the lesson she sketched their oven, with the bed on top for cold nights.

Of the lateral valleys which run up, clad with soft plushy green of ferns and pines, towards the rosy rocks above, I shall say no word, being in anything but a Pre-Raphaelite mood; but let me have words about three things:



JOY OF TYROL

One, the piles of stones by the roadside—for filling ruts—granite, porphyry, alabaster, quartz, and I know not what else, chips and pebbles smoothed by many torrents, which laughed and glistened as jewels do, green and blood-red, sparkling silver, and yellow like Saracen mosaics, last night's heavy dew having prepared them to look their best.

Two, the Sarner lizards—most open-hearted of their kind in all the world—whom we found waiting for us on the hot road, from which they blinked up and then hurried to the rocks overhead, clung to ridges and blinked down with wiry tails awag, till we addressed them openly by their Christian names, blessed them back, and swore Eternal Lizardship with them.

And three, the Sarner grasshoppers, who have a particular genius in human intercourse.

One pea-green swell, of large habit and very obvious pedigree, rode on my shoulder for a mile or more with the dignity of a Royal falcon; and only when—in the heat of noon—I hinted, as one gentleman to another, that every centigram was beginning to tell and even the grasshopper becomes a —, he cast himself on the air with spread pinions, as one who declares himself the younger brother of the Eagle and step-father of the Aeroplane.

I have just received these sketches with admonishing that I forget not *the Big Grey* and *the Red Initials*, the first of which was a dog who appeared out of nowhere, greeted us with naïve affection and sticky tongue, and declared—according to the lady—we were the nicest people he had ever come across. When he offered to carry my stick I let him, and off he whisked, disappearing beyond a turn of the road. A mile farther on, he was sitting gravely in front of an inn, and the moment he caught sight of us sauntered in like a shop-walker. It

was too warm to need encouragement or guidance in the matter of liquids, but the ingenuous style in which the waitress scolded him for his behaviour, with my convicting stick on the table where he had laid it, was amusing—a piece of clever hotel touting ?

The other thing is the quaint use they put initials to here. On washing-tubs and pails we noticed the owners' initials, with I.H.S. in bright red beneath them ; and cut into the side of a road-scraper's barrow K. u. K., Imperial and Kingly !

But there ! what do I care for dogs and dust. There is only one subject racking my brain—stinging me, stunning me. Was ever man born of woman so punished, tortured ? I probably am an incredible fool, every inch of the nincompoop that infernal woman declares me. Till I read her insolent words I had never an idea that I was feeling anything but a remote admiration for a beautiful girl, and now I am self-conscious, awkward, feverish, as if fire were racing through my veins. I could not trust myself to walk with her, and to-morrow shall no doubt learn that India is to take her away, in which case she returns home at once.

What gnaws is that that most unholy, calculating, mammon-worshipping hag should, of all people, be the one to reveal what is my own—most sacredly my own ; and in such a way—with such an appeal—makes me inconsequent—beside myself—mad. God ! perhaps it's the fever of hate that's in my blood ; maybe, but how God Himself must hate such trafficking with Love !

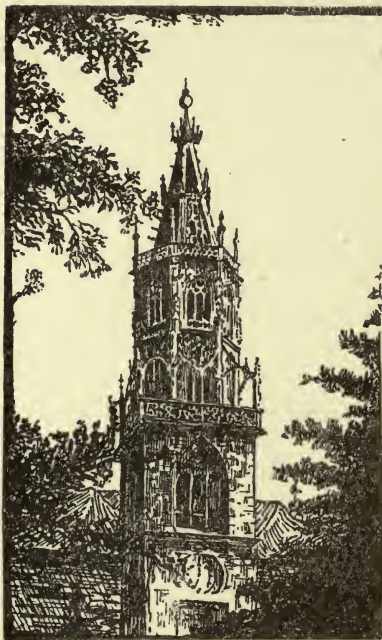
I thank Him beyond measure that Lois is here for moral support. I am stifled, bruised, bewildered—must talk to some one ; and she understands, for we builded together our beautiful dreams of Love, of Love as we thought it might be, and we set them each in our Holiest Place. And behold ! when Love touched Lois and her heart

JOY OF TYROL,

awoke, her dream was all true and sweet and unsullied. But mine? My very soul is sore, smarting from the blows of a sacrilegious fishwife. If there were no such

place as India, what difference could it make to me now?

Yours in
the !—o—!



P.S.—Marsalys
sends the church
spire from her win-
dow.

XXX

BOZEN.

It's mighty difficult to collect one's thoughts and write coherently, but I will do my best. It is late afternoon, and I still await Lois, of whom I have seen naught since breakfast,

when she announced that "Soup" wanted to see her and she meant to go at once.

Matters have become divided into conversation-tight compartments.

This morning I am certain Lois saw right into the inside of me at one glance. I knew all about the S.P.C.I. letter, Miss Ronnell knew that Lois had told me, and we all knew that Ronnell had got a letter from Soup, for he was down last, and a Hotel Splendid envelope,

BOZEN

with *Very Urgent*, Sir Arnold W. R. Wilbraham-Ronnell, Bart., was easy to trace to its source. Yet not one would speak to any of the others of what was in our minds.

I confess I am curious about that letter, and have wondered much whether he knows about the S.P.C.I. Poor Lois went off like a dove to be sacrificed, while a sketch was being produced.

I had correspondence in arrears, and at noon, with some shrinkings, met Ronnell and his sister to seek out a place where we might lunch in comfort.

The shadow of that ineffable aunt has haunted my thoughts all day. I had never realized how a few careless words can burn into the mind and cloud it with its own smoke, but——!

We looked out a place where we might dodge the temperature—for to-day Bozen would content a salamander—and scrambled up to an inn on a rock half as high as Ben Lomond, which looks down its nose at the town.

Up there a gentle breeze purred about the terrace like a kitten, from which terrace the wide valley below was a map hazy in heat.

Before we had even settled on a table a pair of Dachshund puppies had the lady's heart at their disposal; they declared—so she interpreted—that they were simply empty sausage-skins with a covering of fur, intended to be kept full of good minced food, and on their honour had tasted nothing for the last twelve months, and were now contemplating suicide. They were obviously not a day more than twelve weeks old, and lamentably experienced liars at that, I pointed out, but she went down before their noses (a lengthy argument), and calmly ordered lunch for five, to the perplexity of the waitress, who asked if the other two Herrschaften were still “up-climbing,” and to her still

JOY OF TYROL



greater perplexity when she was told that they were already there.

Enclosed please find portrait of two black liars and oblige.

After lunch, in a short absence of her brother, she astounded me by saying that she had talked more openly with me than with any person except Lois, because she felt she knew me so intimately through her, and asked if I did not think she had done the straight thing in offering to give what she could to people in whom she had an intense interest. She said, with the only tremble I ever saw on her lips, "I live in terror of the very thought of living a fruitless life; it seems so mean."

An Hour Later.

Lois has just left me. She is a brick. I feel quite cheered, and will write further after dinner.

After Dinner.

The description of the morning's interview, lunch, and a continuation of talk afterwards, was something to make an outsider chortle.

For myself, I was not chortling any. This fiend is my father's only sister; we have the same blood in our veins—a loathsome thought!

Lois seems to have gone straight to the point, and let her have it hot, entire, neat—said she knew she was a victim of what were called by wise people "bed-devils," and that, as she had had to humour them at Munich and Cortina, she begged to announce that she had got another variety of the disease, "arm-chair devils," and insisted upon her aunt's entire and undivided attention to what she was going to say. Well! fill it in for yourself. I told her she seemed to have done

like the farmer in *Punch*, "didn't forget anything." She said, "Not one point of all that I have kept in pickle for her since I went into long skirts."

I asked if the woman squirmed. "Squirmed!" cried Lois. "She has written to Sir Arnold to go and see her, so that she may tell him she refuses to have an engagement between you and Marsalys unless you wait for *her* living, and she is going to tell him that Marsalys is compromised and must marry you. The creature is mad."

But worst of all is this: if Ronnell is not tractable—can you picture him tractable?—she is going to write direct to *her*!!!

I never saw Lois in first-class tears before. They poured down her cheeks as she talked—"bubbles of indignation" she called them—but she has planned things very neatly, I think, for the next few days.

She did her utmost to get the horrid creature away from Tyrol, and, failing that, has planned that we go early to-morrow to Oberbozen, 3,000 feet above this, leaving no address behind until the coast is clear.

It seems to me that no man was ever before permitted to see so clearly into another man's heart as you are seeing, but you are a good father confessor—a deep well—and it eases my distress to tell you everything.

Ronnell was very dry about those puppies, but I simply cannot put down amusing things while I am in this vice.

The S.P.C.I. are silent so far.

OBERBOZEN



OBERBOZEN

XXXI

FIRST and foremost, an apology for my low spirits of last night ; it was partly the heat. Even Ronnell complained of the blues after his interview at the Hotel Splendid, of which, by the way, I have tried in vain to get him to speak, but never a word more will he say than " Cat."

Not less than a miracle a few thousand feet can do for a mind diseased and a tortured heart ; we are all as jolly as possible up here, and if chance had opened I could have discussed even India with that delightful Marsalys as coolly as a schoolboy discussing white mice with another boy's sister.

The fact is, I let my imagination off the leash these last two nights, and peopled my new house with Her, pictured each room in turn with her in it, saw her in the Rectory pew, pictured—— Oh ! what a mighty fool a man can be if he tries ! No wonder I got no sleep.

We are on a pinnacle of the Temple. Round about us and below the earth is thickly spread with gifts. Between us and the ridge of Schlern, Rosengarten, and Latemar is an immense chasm, from the far side of which the eye climbs up steep pastures, with here and there clustered chalets—like white swans on duckweed—till it comes with a jerk upon the most broken of all

JOY OF TYROL

conceivable horizons. Look well at this drawing : the white part is rock, not snow, flesh-tinted with inde-



scribable beauty at sunset an hour ago. Even Ronnell was moved—in fact, gave birth to a proverb :

“ See the Dolomites and live.”

Though the sun is off the great chain now, light lingers in the pale sky, and the birds are at their vespers. I cannot say what I should like—you would picture me on stilts screaming. But look at this line which

comes against the sky to the East ; see what it suggests at once : just after the sun went down the outline was a black sensitively human thing—a fever-chart over the bed of a sick world.

There it was, the line you follow anxiously when one you love is between life and death, the line you look at when you are all nerves and prayers, because every little stroke quivers with destiny. It got a long way into me, that thing. It is pretty big when you think of it—a bit of jagged earth sticking into Heaven.

OBERBOZEN

The happily designed hotel has outlines not out of keeping with the place ; a rim of distant mountains encircles us ; in front Dolomites as far as Cimone della Pala, a score of miles away, which at this moment seems to touch the stars with its stretching peak ; to the left the white caps of Zillerthalers ; to the right, like waves crested with foam, the snowy Oetzthalers



and Ortler glisten with the last rays of day, reflected from a yellow sheet of cloud.

An engaging small boy, called Hellmuth, who was on terms with Marsalys within two minutes, put on my travel-stained grey felt, and asked what he looked like. "A cherub surveying the world through a hole in a dust-heap"—her answer—delighted his mother.

And now the day is done. I am alone on the terrace ; a glint of light from the dining-room guides my pen. I watched that little boy and his mother. They both loved her at sight.

Alas ! what seemed true when I began this is a lie now. It all comes back again. I even felt so much—what shall I say ?—yes, anguish, walking behind her up the stiff two hours' path this morning that I had to change places with Lois and keep in front, where I could not see her hair : how those brown coils have mixed themselves up with my destiny !

JOY OF TYROL

No, I won't be sickly. I will consider the heads of the cornflowers and red poppies sensibly bent in slumber just below me, and I will lift up my soul in a great thanksgiving for this night, for this Elysian table-land, and for a silence as yet unbroken by electric trams and other such abominations.

The peace of a star-strewn night be unto you.

KASTELRUTH



KASTELRUTH

XXXII



LOIS was so certain that that interfering fiend of an aunt would send for her to our hotel, and, on finding we had levanted, leave Bozen in a rage, that she almost landed us in a trap : but she got us out of it. Having left no address behind, we owed it to Miss Ronnell to get back for the post, so began our descent soon after dawn, choosing a better path than the one we came up by, and more interesting, as it led us

past a very curious formation of earth-pyramids, a hurried drawing of some of which I enclose. The soil is soft, gritty marl, I think, sticky enough to hold together against wind and rain, if unexposed to their force ; and where a stone or tree-trunk is good enough to act as an umbrella, you have these queer radish-like things left, from whose sides water trickles happily away.

When I say that many of them are twenty feet high, you will hold the freaks in proper respect, and do a kowtow to the artist for stopping to draw them for you. Whereby let me do justice to Ronnell, who in these direful conditions is at times a little, you know, not all one wants. I want to say that every time his sister has

JOY OF TYROL

stopped to sketch something, he has taken his pipe out of his mouth and come and nozzled like a dog at me with some kind mumble about you and your "nether-world" luck at not seeing these things for yourself. He is a very good chap.

On the way down Lois cheerily told me she had arranged that any letter to any one of us in a Hotel Splendid envelope was to be taken to her room and inserted *between her pillows* !

"It is quite right," she explained. "You simply have to do that sort of thing with mad people."

For a few minutes, as we were getting into the town, I walked with the Missionary, who said the only biting thing I ever heard from her lips.

"In a sense different from the wonderful Rudyard's, I have 'heard the East a-calling'; but when I told the S.P.C.I. people that I had no cranks about religion, and that any theory I had I was prepared to work out until I found it was false, they told me in a roundabout unctuous way that they were unaccustomed to being so spoken to by candidates, and unfortunately I smiled. At the moment I could have roared with laughter simply at the word 'candidate' being applied to me. I felt like a domestic servant after a place being made to realize her proper position."

The bitterness of her tone hurt me; it showed how she is suffering, and I felt half inclined to telegraph to the wretched people to wire back Yes or No by return.

Lois is no earwig. She looked through such letters as were waiting for us, and brought them out to a table where we were enjoying an honestly earned morning draught. There was no letter from the S.P.C.I. people, and of a sudden Ronnell saw the "Cat's" companion coming out of the hotel, on which Lois went back to the office, stayed about ten minutes, and returned

KASTELRUTH

to us smiling. She had arranged that any letter with a London postmark, addressed Miss M. L. Wilbraham-Ronnell, should be sent on by express to wherever we might be, and that our whereabouts could be learned by telephone to Oberbozen, to which she would wire our address daily, so that, Oberbozen being the only address left at the hotel, we should be undisturbed further, as by no device could those gouty limbs be conveyed up that rugged path.

It was cleverly managed, and half an hour later she had us in the train, and here we are.

To you it must seem ridiculous that we should be behaving like children, dodging a preposterously unreasonable woman ; and so it is—but the most ridiculous element in it all is the force of her personality. You can analyse her whole make-up, and write a list of her hypocrisies, selfishnesses, and vices, and out of them all make a passably pleasant person ; but when they are put into her " personality," you have at once something to be reckoned with, as you reckon with crime and plague and earthquake.

Ronnell himself said on the way up, " If you got to know Satan intimately, you would probably find him a pet lamb compared with your aunt."

Forgive my speaking of the woman so often.

From the valley and the train the walk up was good. Ronnell, who I find heard all about the S.P.C.I. from his sister on the way down from Welschnofen, talked more than I have ever heard him, in devoted admiration of her, without one cynical word. It is a curious transformation to have watched, worked in a month—a silent, dry, observant cynic turned into an enthusiast. He talked as tenderly and affectionately about her as if she had been a Borzoi puppy, which means the high-water mark of his soul's affections.

JOY OF TYROL

The road hither is like a snake, gracefully curling up for five miles into a quadrangle of church, inns, and houses round a fountain and bell-tower.

The village sits on a rocky throne, governing the world around with the sweep of its campanile, whose



pea-green dominating top, of copper prettily corroded, gleams like a torch of green flame upon you from miles away.

The fountain, in sight and sound of which we have dined, is a gathering place of the community; and though the good Gasthaus Lamm has passed its two-hundredth birthday, it still suggests mint sauce rather than red-currant jelly, which speaks well for the climate.

The landlady, with a fat and florid good nature, has just announced that to-morrow is the great day of the year here, the festival of Maria Himmelfahrt, to which people flock from the whole countryside.

Now I am off for a moonlight walk with my pipe, which understands all my trouble and never jars upon me.

Heaven keep thee in quietness of mind.

XXXIII

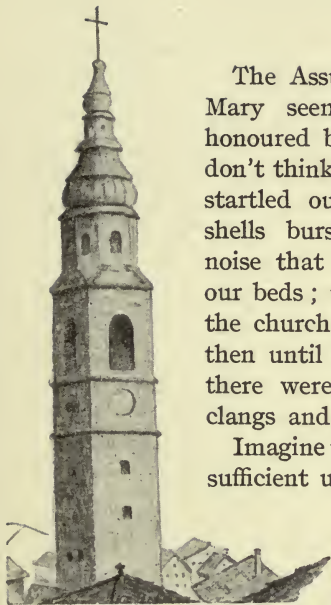
KASTELRUTH.

The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary seems to me something to be honoured by a quiet festival, but they don't think so here. We were well nigh startled out of our skins at 4 a.m. by shells bursting with such unrestrained noise that they might have been under our beds; they certainly seemed to wake the church bells, and at intervals from then until the procession was under way there were nerve-rendering antiphones of clangs and pops.

Imagine us—having taken exercise fully sufficient unto the day, down hill and up, with a sudden reminder of the worm that never dieth in between (which exhausted a lot of good tissue), having inhaled thousands of cubic

feet of oxygen, things conducive to sound sleep—at 4.5 this blessed morning we had to cast further rest into the place of shattered hopes, and start active life again, willy_nilly, with a yawn. It was enough to make bronze statues fidget on their tombs. Ronnell said, when he first heard it, he thought they were practising for the Crack of Doom.

For three or four hours we watched peasants coming in by twos and threes in festival costume, during which time, as our table outside was a good point of view, we drew our breakfast out as long as it would go with relays of coffee, butter, honey, and bread—Ronnell,



JOY OF TYROL

whose digestive bag has a copper lining, I imagine, varying his with occasional beers.



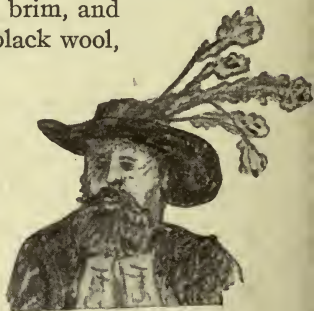
By the time the procession was in shape there were at least a thousand people in the square, and Masses having started at four and continued till nine, no doubt every one of them had attended a complete service.

The procession itself moved like a devout elongated snail, without a sign of self-consciousness in any one of the hundreds of people who took part; and when it threaded its way across the fields to an altar set up temporarily, the colour effect of banners, priests, acolytes, and brilliant dresses was as rich and varied as a rainbow.

Some of the costumes, an exact copy of the fashion of a century since, or even earlier, savoured of burlesque,

in particular the bandsmen's huge green silk hats, with peacocks' feathers upright from the brim, and some of the old women's hats of black wool, conical in shape, with a ribbon of light blue at the top.

To report it fully would be a woman's job, but patches that specially caught me were: eight urchins, with gaudy wreaths round their brows, staggering under the figure of a Saint on a large tray, who was far too weighty for their muscles; a couple of dozen tottery centenarians in long black coats lined with red, and



KASTELRUTH

white lace stockings ; a group of this year's brides in white, with flowers and tinsel crowns on their heads ; and the riflemen who, when everybody else knelt down and uncovered, let off a round of blank cartridge !

But what struck one straight to the heart was the simple devoutness of it all. When the white silk canopy, surrounded by red-cassocked acolytes, preceded by priests, and held up by muscular men with garters like ribbons off a gipsy tambourine and green

chaplets as their head-dress, came along, the white-haired old priest beneath it, who tottered with difficulty under the weight of a huge silver monstrance, seemed to bring a mysterious silence upon the people, which I have never, in France, Spain, or Italy, noticed anything at all like. The only people who did not show reverence when he carried the Host past them were some expensively gowned females with Semitic profiles, who had driven in from a fashionable hotel at a distance to get snapshots of what to them was only à picturesque peep-show.

Ronnell, who by the way is developing the religious instinct rapidly, spent a good half-hour in putting his stalwart frame as a screen between cameras of what he calls "Pork-eating



JOY OF TYROL,

Rebeccas " and the pictures they had no right to get.

The incidents of travel are said to have no limits, yet the incidents which gather round a certain woman beat them. This afternoon Lois and Ronnell both sought a nap, but when I discovered the sketcher not so inclined I walked with her to her bidding. A mile and a half from here, where she sat down to draw, her bidding was that I should read aloud to her from start to finish the First Epistle of St. John while she did the Schlern.



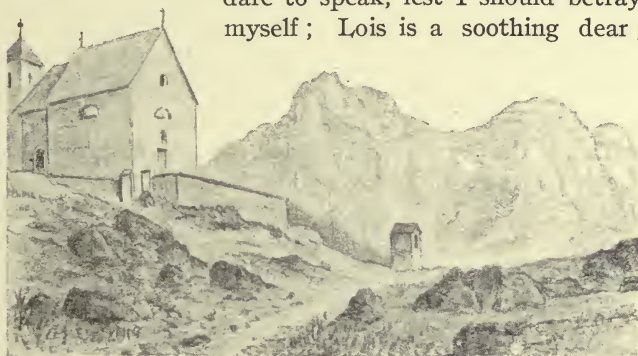
I obeyed like a slave, and at the end, like a member of the S.P.C.I. Committee, told her what sinfully unsabbatarian work she was engaged in,

to which she replied that she did not mind that in the least if she could give you pleasure, and added in defence that there was a church in the picture, and anything to do with a church was right and proper on Sunday, except going into one with a self-satisfied heart. And when I asked why she didn't put a thistle in the foreground to throw up the height of the mountain, she replied: "Isn't that a splendid end-up? It's the most pregnant P.S. ever put to a letter. The dear old man, after writing all he had found out about God, finishes by pleading with his little children to guard themselves against false ideas about Him—as it ought to be

KASTELRUTH

translated. What a benign destiny it would have been to have lived in Patmos long ago and known that man, and we haven't even a biography of him. I sometimes hate the past for concealing so much." The nervous strain shows itself at times. I noticed it in her eyes while she was sketching.

This place is, as she would say, absolute, yet three of us are miserable. I am dumb, or at least hardly dare to speak, lest I should betray myself; Lois is a soothing dear;



Marsalys is a Princess and a Saint with self-control passing wonderful; good old Ronnell is very like one of his Borzois—give him exercise and food, and therewith he is content.

To-day has been a bright green oasis among desert days, because the hour I spent alone with her was like a little lake on which the blue of Heaven rested; and if I spoke but few words of my own, I read the great manifesto of the heart to her out of her own little silver-cased divining crystal.

No telegram has come, for which I have been more glad than I have any reason for being, and to-morrow we propose an easy ascent for the sake of exercise and a good view, to prepare us for the Schlern on Tuesday,

JOY OF TYROL

if we are still free. The path, they tell us, is good, and clearly marked with red splashes of paint. We start at six.

I am wofully sleepy to-night, thank God.

XXXIV

KASTELRUTH.

It's a sound thing to be about when Day is getting up—to see it stretch its limbs and come quietly across the dew, and let itself down with cautious steps to the valleys; to see how at its first glance the hills break into a smile because Light is being born.

This is the joy of the breaking day, the joy of birth, the joy of something altogether new. It matters not how often you have watched for the morning, or how well you know the name by which the calendar has already called it, when it comes it is not Monday or any other day to you, it is something unknown before, fresh from the Vast Creative Soul. You look it in the eyes, and, behold! they are eyes of a wondering child to whom everything is new.

That is what one feels in the shivering hour before the birds begin; to watch the way of the Dawn with the sullen forests and the cold rocks above is to see a new thing under the sun.

It really is. But you don't get the feeling all at once. This very morning, for example, we got up at an hour of such exceeding chilliness that the rapidest of baths struck frost into one's spine, and hot coffee seemed but a travesty of warming food. Only after two active miles across meadows were we in possession of anything associated with the upper storeys of the human frame, soon after which we turned into a wood and came on something between an avalanche of rock

KASTELRUTH

and a demented
timber-yard—a
slope of broken trees
mixed with boulders

at as steep an angle as left it
possible for them to cling together.

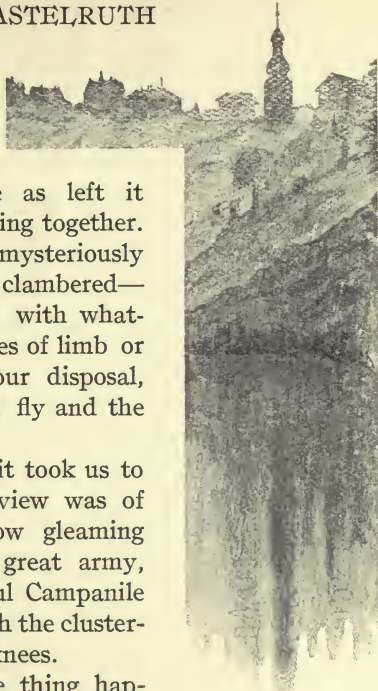
The red marks had mysteriously
disappeared, but we clambered—
nay, swarmed—up it with what-
ever prehensile faculties of limb or
eyelash we had at our disposal,
envying the six-footed fly and the
lithe lizard.

Two tedious hours it took us to
the top, where the view was of
peaks of distant snow gleaming
white like tents of a great army,
and below, our faithful Campanile
playing at dominie with the cluster-
ing houses about his knees.

Up there a strange thing hap-
pened. On a stretch of turf dotted
with white and blue flowers, Mar-
salys—thinking herself out of sight—deliberately lay
down and kissed the earth, and when she found that
I had seen her said, without affectation, "She is so
dear a Mother ; it is a habit of mine. She does not
mind."

A strange, Grecian passion which you will appreciate.
It reminds me how often I have noticed that she never
picks a flower, but when she admires one specially,
gently touches it as if it were a child.

Half-way down I found her sitting on a boulder
chuckling at Ronnell, who was nursing an ankle, count-
ing the number of nails torn from his boots, and calling



JOY OF TYROL

for a cab ; but chiefly chuckling at her discovery of one dab of red paint on a stone, and a couple of yards of clear path lying between two pieces of broken crag.

Only then it dawned upon us that what had happened was simply this : a recent storm had gathered every available rock and tree, and swished them down in a torrent of mud and snow, with everything before it ; and our neatly marked, clear, and easy path had not been in its proper place these many days, but was huddled in the wood below, hidden under and mixed up with a heap of débris.

It's a riling ploy to look back upon ; we gave six hours to it, with neither bite nor sup, and Ronnell swore his ankles were being eaten up of worms when we sat down to lunch as the " Hunger-bell " chimed midday.

I have written this after tea on a balcony, into which our four rooms open, facing the huge Schlern, on to whose back we probably go to-morrow. Ronnell is lying on his bed, smoking hard, with an illustrated German book about Dachshunds in hand and a dictionary on his pillow. Lois is washing up the tea-things, and *she* is probably reading the *Theologia Germanica* or the " Sutras," or possibly the *Fliegende Blätter* !

P.P.—A wonderful evening. Sun just gone away like a round pink baby to its bath.

Looking again, it is asleep, dreaming everything is gold about it, and now pale coverlets of purple mixed with scarlet are upon its crib—blessed babe !

Across the sky is a telegraph wire, on which an unbroken line of swallows are gossiping in great good humour. They love each other prettily. By Jove ! it is through that very wire at any moment— This waiting is intolerable. Forgive me. But what must it be to her ? Yet all day she has cast not a shadow, has thrown

KASTELRUTH

herself into everything, has never even been absent-minded.

This is the perfect self-effacement which is so rare, so Divine, that it baptizes one afresh.

That hunger-bell, and I am done.

We were waiting for lunch when it rang, and we watched the passing peasants stop with bent heads. The men uncovered till it ceased, a waitress carrying three large mugs of beer in each hand pulled up like Lot's wife, an old man leading a horse stood still before its nose so that it could not move.

It's a capital reminder that dinner is not merely an animal necessity. I might introduce it in my new parish, with permission from the County Council to stop all traffic for five minutes.

P.S.—Ronnell has just remarked from his bedroom window that "the name of the beastly mountain ought to have been sufficient warning: Puflatsch." He says it's a Red Indian expression for keeping flies off! If you had seen his head and long neck I should have called this P.S. a drip from a gargoye, and you would have smiled.

XXXV

KASTELRUTH.

The letter has arrived. Lois telephoned from the Club hut at the top, and found that a messenger was then on his way. Of its contents I know nothing as yet. Is it any of my business to ask? Hand of Destiny, is it not? is it not?

Meanwhile I can't go and ask at her door, so, to keep myself employed, I will tell what I can of our climb.

JOY OF TYROL

It is the simple life without affectation here. No one being up in the inn, we let ourselves out and left the door open as the clock struck 4.30. The base of the Schlern appeared to be half a mile from us, its huge body three miles up into the sky.

As to the sun, there was no hint of any baby about it this morning when it rose, gleaming through the serrated horizon of fir-trees, of which it made jet filigree, kindling the torches of day—the giant crags—with the aptness of long experience, going to work without fluster or excitement, and filling the valleys deliberately with soft haze, of what milliners call electric blue, like an aged alchemist.

I can't help wondering what Ronnell—— No, about this climb.

We had a jolly breakfast at a little bath establishment looking on dewy grass, over which the light gambolled like fairies on gossamer trapezes, while innumerable birds gave voice to the morning, after which we were at once on a stiff zigzag for three hours solid, at the end of which Ronnell announced that he had arrived at the attitude of mind of the common fly.

Of good things on the way was a cascade falling into a half-circle of stratified stones in tiers, like a model of the Greek Amphitheatre at Syracuse; and a merry innkeeper's wife, at whose hands we swallowed home-made cakes and home-made drink distilled from roots which grow upon her plateau—as queer a creature as you could wish for at 6,000 feet above normal human levels. She showed us her pig, fowls, and dog; then, her mule and herself smiling together—she stood with her cheek pressed against its chin, made a chuckling noise which the brute understood, and both exhibited all the teeth they had in a highly idiotic manner.

Well, with here and there a risky way, and here and

KASTELRUTH

there a fly-path, we achieved the high hump in comfort, and found a cloudless expanse awaiting us. Never was better day provided—the view passed the wonders of Dreamland. There were moments when I even forgot the S.P.C.I., for we had the joy of silence—that mysterious joy which can be felt, for which these jostling stupid days in which we live cry out without knowing it is this they want, the joy of the first chapter of Genesis, the joy of the mother-tincture of things.

I lay down on a carpet of edelweiss and let the Spirit of the Mountains talk. It was articulate. "Little human creature, for a moment off the track of prejudices and out of hearing of the chinking of coins, with us you are back at the first facts of existence; round our knees the seasons gather to plan their doings, birds and men nest among our robes, loving the house-room we provide. Listen: the meadows laugh and give bread, they are your servants; the streams laugh and are merry, you make them your slaves; the towns laugh and are filled with deceit, they are your prisons. We are your comrades; you cannot make us obey. We alone are your equals, and to us only can you liken yourselves when you think wisely; therefore count yourself a child of the horizons, as we are; be the first to catch the message of the Light, and the last to hold it, for Light is Love, and Love is All. Without it you are as the fungus which grows in shadow and is born to corruption."

I really am pretty well mixed, mad, and miserable. . . .

Northward, the heights were as giants asleep, with their sheets drawn high over their heads, their knees forcing the snow coverlets up, cutting large white triangles into the blue.

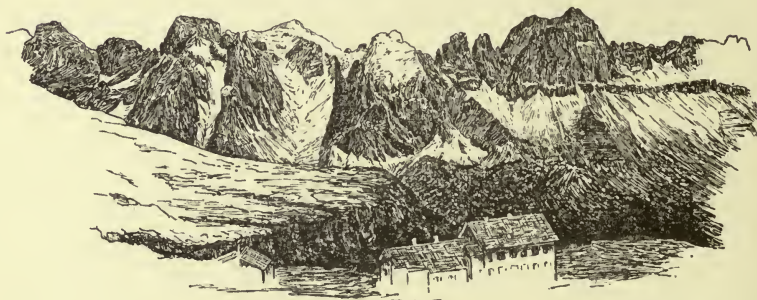
This black-and-white jotting gives you what we saw, with our backs to Oberbozen, from which I sent the

JOY OF TYROL

outline, we on top of the whale-shaped form ; to our right the ghost-like Swiss-Engadine mountains, to our left white hints of Venediger and Gross Glockner in Carinthia, and in front these towers and spires of the Rosengarten.

Let the savage majesty of these defiant daggers into your imagination, and tell me if your emotion does not run to tears.

I—— Heaven send you more amusement out of this



dreary effort than I am finding in it, but there was a thing with a smile in it at lunch ! Opposite us a man with a grossly exaggerated paunch and equivalent capacity for gastric indulgence (we wondered how he carried his avoirdupois from the valley), undertook three beefsteaks with vegetables to match, punished them with the heartless glee of a Squeers who had a grievance against them, and afterwards enjoyed the memory of his attack with a fixed smile across his fat face.

“ Happy, happy liver,” whispered Marsalys, as if Wordsworth’s skylark and he had been born twins !

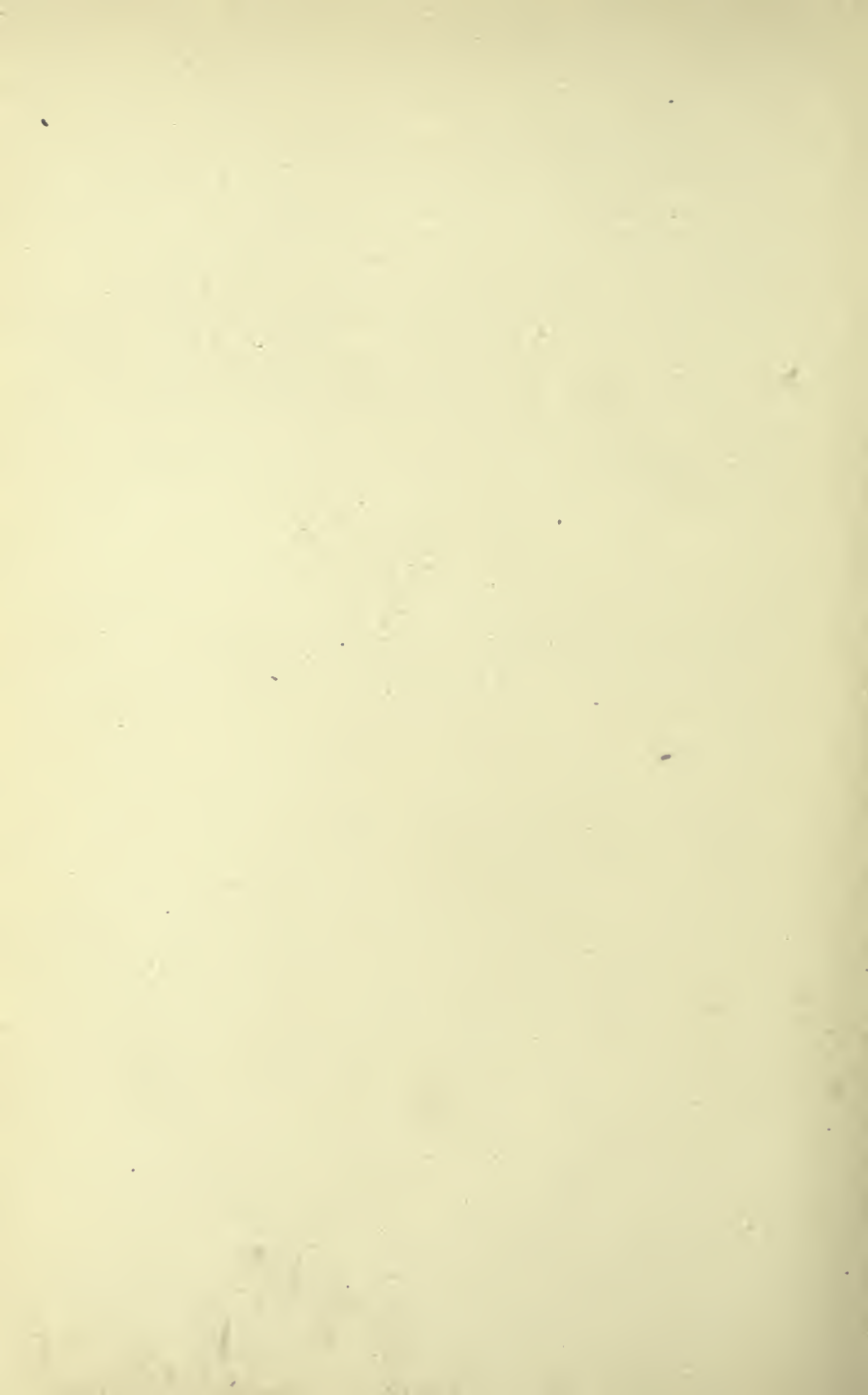
Five thousand feet up, and then again down, and a lot of miles across—a good thirty in all—and I have written a fine, clear, consecutive—— This letter is not final one way or the other—the letter to her, I mean.

KASTELRUTH

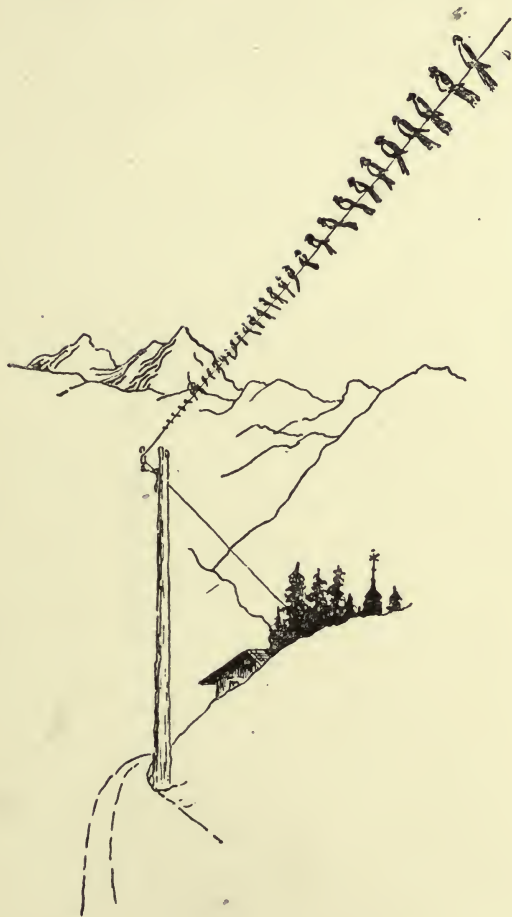
It seems that she said something about the spirits of animals which rather ruffled their fur—the S.P.C.I. fur, I mean—and when they asked for further explanations, she staggered them by her knowledge of Eastern beliefs on the subject, and her partial sympathy with them.

She has evidently hidden her convictions in their measures of meal, and there is considerable fermentation, but I have no doubt it is simply bluff on their part, this silly hesitation.

The situation is full of irony. They plead and pray for workers, a woman of first-class intellect and electric personality comes along and says "Please let me go," but the moment they find she is full of life, love, *and intelligence* they are as suspicious as herbalists about a qualified physician.



BRIXEN-AM-EISAK



BRIXEN-AM-EISAK

XXXVI

THIS morning's early hours burnt : vast, careless outlines, cold, scented air, the dreaming valley below, and my miserable self doing my uttermost to make it possible for her to be accepted by these people for work at the other side of the globe !

It hurt most brutally, yet what else could I ? She walked with me for the sole purpose of getting help on how to reply to the blessed S.P.C.I. The fact is, she understands the Oriental far better than the English clerical mind, and perplexed them by her way of speaking about animals. The way she talked to me about the sacredness of instinct in them, and what it may mean in times to come, was the way of a pathologist discussing symptoms, but distinctly not the way to talk to that Committee, as she appears to have done.

I did my honest best, and hope—— No, why should I lie ? I am crushing down my hopes, along with my fears ; but thank God she could not guess what that talk meant.

Her quiet courage is almost superhuman. When we had said all that there was to be said on the matter, she began an amusing tale about a cousin in the Hussars who trained an Irish terrier to long drop-jumping, by starting it after bones from a table, then from a wall, next from a first-floor window, and just as I was prepared to hear of its leaping from the dome of St. Paul's

JOY OF TYROL,

into the Churchyard, she stopped dead on the road with "Look at that line of music written in birds," and while she put it on paper the others overtook us. . . .

I sit at a table waiting for dinner, from which, over a row of pink oleanders, I can lift up mine eyes to the hills.

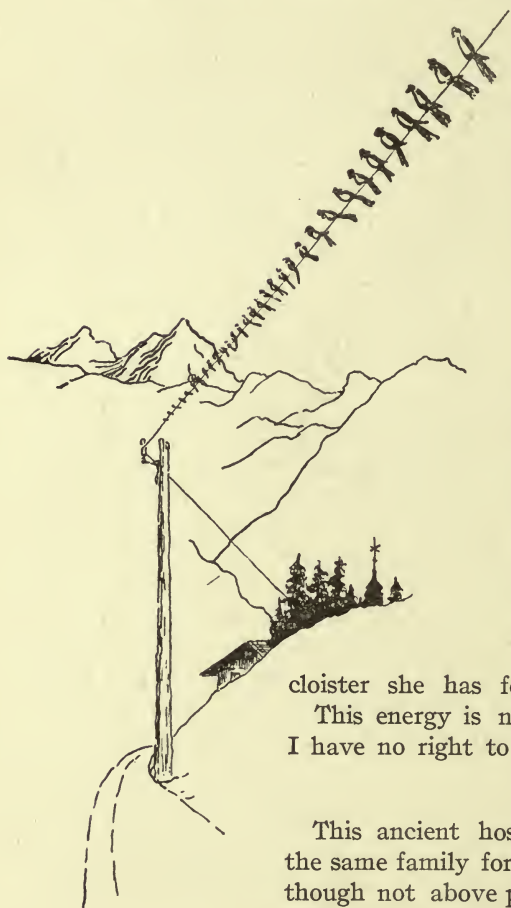
She has just given me this peep of the Cathedral towers from a lane, with an apology for its crudeness, and promises to send a better thing to-morrow of a charming bit of

cloister she has found. .

This energy is neurotic, but, alas ! I have no right to put a drag on it.

Post-prandial.

This ancient hostelry has been in the same family for four centuries, and though not above possessing a garage, we were unpleasantly surprised at having our dinner disturbed by two loud-looking fellow-countrymen, who had not a German word between them.



BRIXEN-AM-EISAK

Utterly floored at finding no table-d'hôte, we stood in to help them over the menu, while they swore in typical English style at the absence of any — native who could understand them, and at a number of other matters.

The least attractive of them complained that things on the Stock Exchange were so bad that he could only take "three weeks off," which was "no holiday—merely a loaf round"; and Ronnell, ass that he was, mumbled "Half a loaf is better than no holiday," which turned on the tap of what proved to be a "funny man," who deluged us from the next table for a mortal hour with rot of this sort: "You can take an East-ender to the water, but you can't make him wash"; "One swallow doesn't make a drink"; "Those who live in lace blouses shouldn't show bones." He was worse than a gramophone.

Deo gratia, I hear the grunting of their car as it carries them away.

Lucky man again! Overleaf is a tunnel through which we came this morning, forgotten till now.

Ronnell, who is a whale at visitors' books, has handed



JOY OF TYROL



me a selection of entries, in which he professes—between the lines—to have discovered most of the important facts about the people who wrote them :

Mr. and Mrs. Royson G. Snittering and K. Slipps Wetterdag, Louisville, U.S.A. A sightly location.

Contessa Volterra Rogi di Salviano e Montegestignano. Avec suite.

Algernon F. Sprinkstone-Hathaway and C. F. King-Shunison. Trinity (*sic*).

And this :

Peter McRathie and Marcus Dull, walking tour from St. Andrews, Scotland, to Venice (with the exception, of

course, of the Straits of Dover).

The “ of course ” shows a “ meticulous conscientiousness,” he thinks.

I am off reading. I don’t trust myself to think. He is worrying at his Dachshund book. The girls have gone. I’ll use you as a target, and have a shot at your sense of humour.

Be it known unto you, then, most wise man, that not all other people—not all parsons, even—are wise, in token whereof, if you will step this way, I will prove that I, who have said it, am no liar.

The village had but one inn, and the place was infested by soldiers. Officers were quartered, of course, on the inn, every room in which, except our four, had been engaged by them.

We were all sitting on Lois’ balcony, when a carriage drew up below. “ The voice of the Turtle,” whispered Ronnell, “ the voice which only the wife of a beneficed clergyman can achieve, the voice of sanctity, pepper, and oil, mixed in equal parts.”

We had no choice but to hear ; it was like a steam-siren, demanding that every one should listen.

" Ik harber telegrapheert." (" We did telegraph, did we not, Chrysostom ? Disgraceful ! ")

" Vossss ! " (" Chrysostom, you must write to *The Times* ! ")

" Arber veer müssen Simmerun harben."

There was not in truth room for an extra baby in the inn, and here were silly people demanding why on earth these innkeepers were not more respectful, as though their houses were made of thin indiarubber, and could be blown out at a moment's notice into extra rooms.

Ronnell muttered " Let us see this great sight." We did ; we stood up and looked down upon it. He was correct. The lady was long of tooth, and Chrysostom, a poor, henpecked-looking creature, bidden to " stand up and take the matter into his hands," did so.

The congregation was composed of the proprietor, his wife, two or three servants, some officers, and in the gallery—unnoticed—ourselves, to which group he delivered his soul in the same unctuous and dogmatic tone he no doubt uses upon his bucolic flock at Little Muddlingham. He did it, moreover, in the most brutally shattered German : " Mine naytik Frow harben sent ine Telegrapheeren for Simmeren, so ve müssen harben ine Simmeren " ; and the lady did the antiphone in English : " Thank you, Chrysostom darling. Now these people will understand they have got an Englishman to deal with."

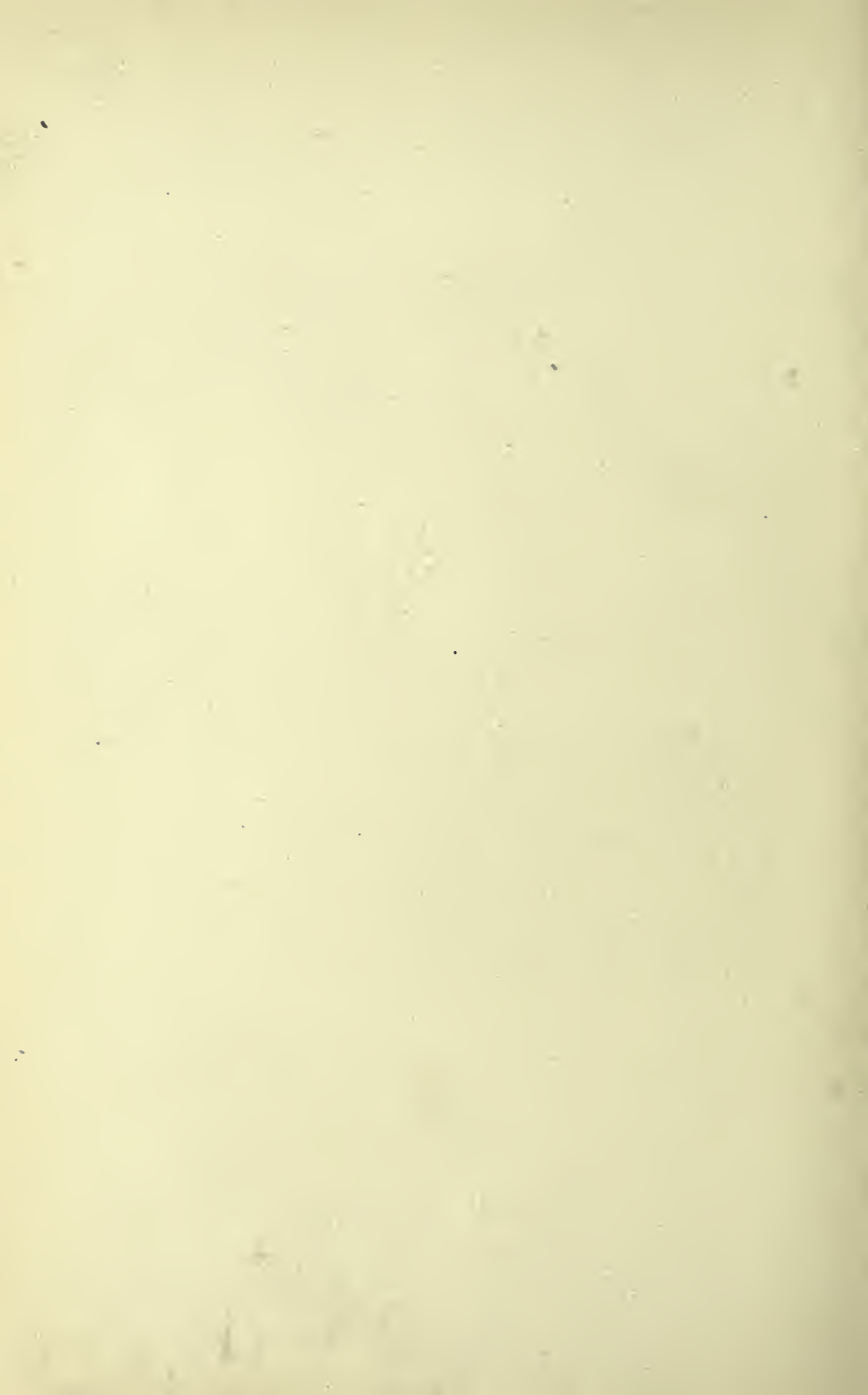
But they did not enlarge the inn even for that dear little home-made pope.

Lor ! how silly it looks now I have set it down.

How silly, silly, silly everything is !

WEISSLAHNBAD- IN-TIERSERTHAL





WEISSLAHNBAD-IN-TIERSERTHAL

XXXVII



SORRY fool that I am, only now, with this lovely cloister sketch before me, it dawns on my dull brain how it is she has put so much into these things day after day.

They have been like leeches carrying off the fever from her veins, have given her an excuse for being alone ; and if you had eyes to detect all there is between these strokes, it is a beautiful soul's torture you would see. She is terribly anxious, talked of nothing else on the way up here for two hours, and—torture of tortures—almost paralysed me by explaining, with tremor in her voice, that her great ambition has always been to be “wanted.” It cut like steel. Of all words, “wanted” !

I had better write of other things.

I think I told you we find that Soup is still sitting tight at Bozen, so at the leading of fancy we came here—by way of Klausen, whose street I send overleaf—because we liked the name White-Stone-Avalanche.

We were not misled. A hotel alone among mountains as good as any which man ever chose to nestle amongst.

JOY OF TYROL



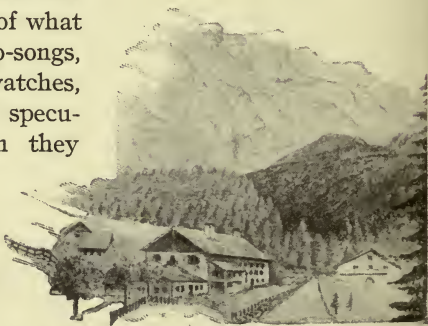
Below you will find an "innocent picture of it, in the spirit of Charlotte Yonge, which may safely be enjoyed by young people, being unnecessarily truthful in detail, with a general appearance of romance," she says.

We dined earlier than the other people—"Sommer-frischlers," as they would call themselves—and cooled our coffee with observation of their ways.

That where the body is there the eagles are gathered together, a couple of dozen hungry birds—en pension—

demonstrated, strolling up and down the terrace long before their bell rang, with ears alert for the first sound of what Ronnell called their soup-songs, impatient with their watches, and crumpling brows in speculation over what, when they opened their mouths, God and the cook would send them.

For ourselves, we stipulated to eat and drink wherever and



whenever we elected, an arrangement which meant a table under the stars to-night. The place is 22-carat, the hotel of the first water.

There is to be a big day to-morrow—fireworks, Chinese lanterns, and all manner of larks. The excitement will buck us up, I hope.

The girls have gone. Ronnell is buried in his Dachs-hunds and his dictionary, and—— The eagles are becoming loquacious ; they have turned the sharp edge of their appetite.

To-day has eaten up more nerves than I could spare. I seem to have nothing to say, and though on every side the scenery is the “most impressive among the Western Dolomites,” Baedeker says, I never noticed it.

It cuts me to the purse-strings to have to spend honest Austrian hellers for the transmission of this refuse. No, it doesn't ; I am forgetting the sketches which go with it.

Into your ear—one word. I would give anything for the comfort for a single hour—the counsel of—— No, not yours, good old chap—and not Lois'. It is, if you can understand—I don't think you can—all that is contained in the sacred name *Mother*.

Alas ! I was not born of brave stuff ; the depths give me a strange fearfulness.

P.S.—The Divine Tragedy, “Wanted !” That word will haunt me to all Eternity. “Wanted.” Oh, my tiny, staggering soul ! Forgive me, but it is not easy to write of anything else to-night.

JOY OF TYROL

XXXVIII

WEISSLAHNBAD.

At the wanton hour of five the roaring of mountain howitzers woke us to the fact that this was in noisy truth the Kaiser's birthday.

The village below is gay with colour : two long flags—Tyrolese red and white, Austrian yellow and black—floating with Royal dignity from the church tower ; our hotel disguised in gauds, Chinese lanterns spluttering over the terrace, and motley bunting on the breeze as I write.

This moment a rasping " Nein " turns my thoughts to a small boy of four staying here, whom Marsalys has christened " Herr Nein," to the amusement and encouragement of his governess. Whatever he is told to do or not to do, he makes the same reply, " Nein." You can hear the petulant refusal from the woods, the dining-room, his bedroom, or wherever he happens to be, clear and loud, with a persistence worthy of a better object. If I had the brat for a couple of days' discipline, I would whip the word clean out of his vocabulary.

The scene at dinner was picturesque, the waitresses dressed in black and yellow, the Kaiser's portrait framed in black leaves and yellow flowers, and by every one's plate a pyramid of fruit and a buttonhole tied with black-and-yellow ribbon—a present from the landlord.

They have pretty ways ; but I want to tell you of the marvel we have seen : nothing else matters.

Late in the afternoon the Rosengarten, which had all day been a grey forgotten Lazarus, without even a dog to remember the gashes on its sides, was lifted suddenly into Abraham's bosom. Cold rock, it became a living spirit. The glow lasted a bare ten minutes, and quite soon the sky grew dark, with only a faint

WEISSLAHNBAD-IN-TIERSERTHAL

sheen of moonlight to show where the mountain was. We lay on a meadow above this, watching, conscious of the majestic beauty of what was being shown to us ; and the contrast between that indescribable apparition—that sacrament of flesh and blood far up in the evening sky—and the throng to which we came down, was profanely comic.

But wait. An hour after sunset a lurid, flame-like purple began slowly to gleam from it, and we hurried to the meadow again. It was bewitching—staggering—I have no word for it—richer and more splendid than before, with black sky background. From purple it blossomed into the red of damask roses, and, just when the colour seemed to have got permanent hold, it floated off like smoke in a moment, and the Night took it into its arms again. Yet there be who say that miracles do not happen !

Far away westward a thousand leagues, a blazing pageant of red cloud was following the sun, and this huge cliff remembered it, and we were allowed to watch.

The Sommerfrischlers, I tell you, seemed to us like little children frivolling in the very Court of the Most High.

Under coloured lights of pink and yellow and blue upon the terrace, women ambled up and down smoking, men laughed loudly as they talked, and youngsters who ought to have been in bed dodged among the bandsmen's legs, screaming with mischievous glee.

Upon my soul, I question whether that marvel of a whole mountain's heart meant more to any of them than those miserable electric letters which click the existence of four-legged meat-juice into the darkness of London do to us.

The only congruous human thing of the evening was the singing of some folk-songs, without premedita-

WEISSLAHNBAD-IN-TIERSERTHAL

then—eyes like the Rosengarten itself, with snow melting before the sun.

She speaks her "whole soul" without opening her lips.

XXXIX

WEISSLAHNBAD.

Last night I had no mood for great matters. Now, by Sunday morning light, I will try to tell my thoughts. An hour before sundown, as I said, we climbed to a



place which gave us the whole mountain, and lay among gentians, saxifrage, and other gentle creatures. The huge mass above, with its jagged profile, careless of form, uncomfortable indeed, contrasted ill with the tilled order of the valley; yet in a trice—when the sun westered and its longest beams caught the stretched reefs at right angles—everything about it was transformed, the peaks were lifted out of all earthly comparisons, and some of their mystery came down upon us. What happened was of such a sort as you would think impossible; it quickened as we watched into the glow of red sunshine and fiery wine and shed blood—the colour of Tyrol's Eagle, in fact—and the surprise of it was all spread out without warning.

JOY OF TYROL

Wisely have the natives let their delight into its name. It is verily a Rose-garden ; but in that hour of vision a Crucifix by the path in front of us, with spread arms and bleeding brow, let me behind the roses to the secret at the heart of it.

His hands pointed East and West, His eyes were on the wild flowers, and that One Unwearying Heart seemed to be still overflowing in sacrifice.

It made me wander back to the first days of Creative Joy, when a Fatherly Wisdom planned the Earth, and loved the plan, and gave it shape.

It made me linger in the uncounted ages when a Fatherly Patience was persuading it into loveliness, when Light was given, the magic touch which draws from the Sea its dreams, and interweaves them with the wind into white forests in the meadows of blue sky.

It made me stand trembling in those forgotten days when these colossal coral islands were tilted up by hands of fire from ocean floors. No, it is not fancy—only last night I felt it, was gripped by it, taught by it.

That mountain pulsing with blood—then dead—then alive once more—then again dead, all made of what once in every part of it had actual life, it flung the fact at me that Sacrifice is the centre of things—past, present, to come.

My thoughts swept across everything I have known of pleasure, interest, hope, and fear, the delights of eye and memory, the wings of fancy, the torturing ecstasy of certain feelings ; and there—as if the Heart of Heaven were opened for a moment—I seemed to see a Love which does not rest, which lives and dies and lives and dies for the children of its care.

In the silent purple evening I saw a Heart and could not miss its meaning. Joy is the child of Sacrifice, and if the fingers of the West kindled the rocks into glory,

fingers which were of the East kindled the flame within me, and I saw as never before that the highest Joy blossoms out of Sacrifice. It is a relief to write this. Of myself I should never have reached such a conception, but when one lives in the atmosphere of that imperial faith of hers one grows accustomed to heading for the source of things.

Lois commands that we go to church, so——

I walked the three miles back with Marsalys, who was like her favourite mare Northampton Jane, "full of beans," champing at her bit about religious silliness and the unholy earnestness with which people exalt tenets which divide them from others, and take no thought of what they have in common with them. Ingenuously as a girl of ten, she told me that she has the gregarious instinct in matters of worship, and has only five times missed early Mass since she came out—at Monte Croce, Auronzo, Kastelruth, and here yesterday. So hers were the delicate steps I heard in the dawn at Gries—hers—and, unobservant slug that I be, I only woke up to what dozens of hotel servants on our route could have told me, when I heard it from her own lips! It is true that the Creator did not cut me according to His finest pattern, as you have more than once pointed out, but He has let me know Marsalys and hear her talk. Her words were mystic, samite (what is samite? it sounds something rich and lovely), samite I say, and wonderful: "Mass is inadequate by itself, expresses only a little of what the heart wants, leaves whole tracts unrefreshed; but God reveals Himself in many ways, and has done it very beautifully to these people. How they worshipped spellbound! What an uplifting it gives one to kneel among them—simple souls with but few thoughts about anything—when they are

JOY OF TYROL

feeding on one infinitely great thought, that they are under the self-same roof as God Himself. The very air was full of Faith, of Presences. One girl's face, as she passed me going out, wore joy upon it like a veil, as if she had looked upon the Ultimate Vision ; everybody was touched with a fever of worship pulsing through them. Religion bears many flowers ; the variety of creeds in visible form increases under cultivation, but all equally want sun, and stretch towards it. Most of their roots—perhaps all—are bedded in prejudice, and their leaves jostle rudely against each other, just because they are greedy for as much light as they can get. Howbeit, Romans or Protestants, when every one about you is keen—peasants or angels—that makes a sacrament in itself."

Good Protestantism that—protesting against the proprietary tendency of people who speak of the Almighty as if He were their own particular clergyman.

At a venture I read to her what I have written about last night's séance, and had her warm approval. " Quite right ; whenever we have to sacrifice anything we are inclined to approach God as if He were cold rock, with no understanding of such things, but able, if He likes, to give us a post-dated cheque to make up for our loss at a considerably later time. Last night let us behind the scenes."

Ronnell is perpetual comic relief. He sat on the churchyard wall with his dog book while we were at service, and when he came upon us finishing our talk, pointed out that the long earflaps of a Dachshund give it great natural advantages in the matter of conversation, acting as lids to keep the mind free from disturbing facts, while their attenuated torsos add to their joy of life, inasmuch as no dinner is too long for them. His sister told him that his mind was a mere kennel, and

when his hat is off she can hear whines and barks inside his skull.

One point even you with your refrigerating mind will enjoy. Oh! ye moon and stars! the Eagles are at it still, discussing supper with guttural laughter. Discussing? Yes, that's what the S.P.C.I. people have no doubt been doing in their withered little souls to-day. There is only the black velvet sky above, with innumerable diamonds strung across it, and a light in her room now—perhaps she is at prayer. Great Heavens! the monstrous impertinence of these little fungoid theorists, mannerless, heartless creatures, snuffling like swine over pearls. I wish I could torture them as they are torturing her.

S—P—C—I: loathsome initials. I hate my bed because of them; they sit and jeer at me from the ceiling as soon as I lie down; I seem to recollect them as taking a leading part in feverish nightmares in my youth, and now for many days they have hovered like carrion birds over the empty, desolated years ahead.

Sacrifice? The idea recurs—but I always understood that the lamb offered was a male. Yes! of course it is me, my heart that must go. She has not a suspicion. Dear chap, I grow stupid, but this is not a simple job I have been given, not a bit simple.

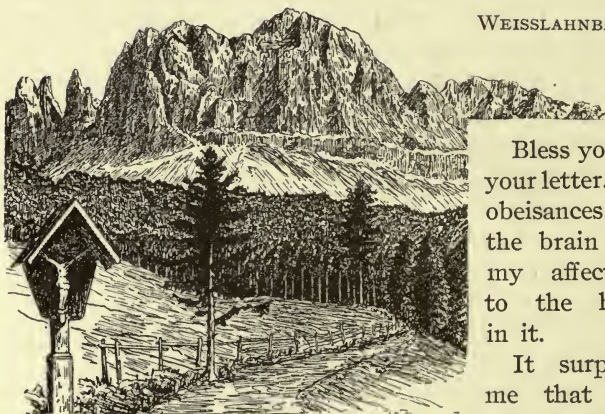
To-morrow we plan to go furroeking among those sunset rocks. It seems to me impertinent, but Lois bids something active for Marsalys' sake.

Now to my torture under those demon letters.

Yours from the cellars of Inferno.

JOY OF TYROL

XL



WEISSLAHNBAD.

Bless you for your letter. My obeisances to the brain and my affections to the heart in it.

It surprises me that you can make a show of politeness to the doings of my pen, which I am conscious has become but a dull performer in the arena of a very little circus. She is, as you say, "quite an interesting person, and out of the common run"—quite.

This is our mountain. She calls it the one conscious profanity of her life, and suggests a new Office of Burial for those "mentally at sea"—*e.g.* people who attempt to draw such things. Stand on the top, then drop to the snowy ledges, and slide down the shaly rock by the dirty-looking shoot—unheeded of your breeks—till you reach the fir-trees, compare it with the view from the Schlern, and get the "feel."

Eleven hours in the air of Olympus is good in itself, but fits one ill for consecutive setting down of ideas.

WEISSLAHNBAD-IN-TIERSERTHAL

As I think my way back through the day—the disclosures of the winding path, the abysses of boisterous gorge tossing the streams along, the peaks sitting up mile after mile as we came within sight, the kingdom of yellow and grey stone above the green growing things, the Holy Ground among those very rocks in which the sunset had revealed so much—I feel like the sea at low tide on a windless night, devoid of one single wave wherewith to express itself. This, however, I can say, that the mystery does not disappear when one gets behind the curtain; and while a man may fear, admire, or respect other mountains, he needs *must love* the Dolomites.

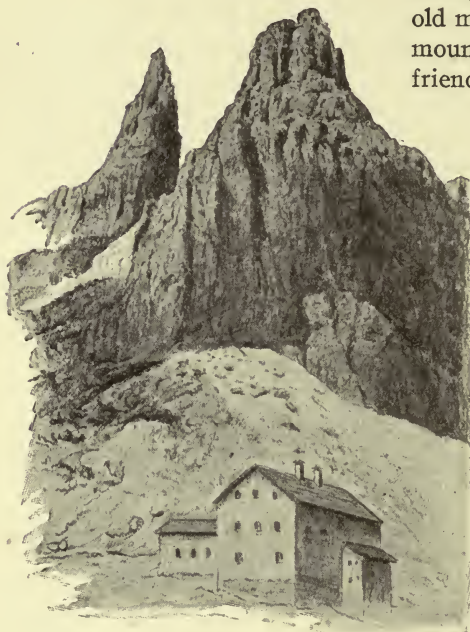
We dawdled in the woods, watching the gambols of a pair of black squirrels, whether “man and wife” or “single” they did not say; but for what servants call “carryin’s-on” I commend all who are interested in the phenomena of the affections to a pair of squirrels trysting on feathery branches of mountain pines.

No one knows enough about the feelings of squirrels to confute you, so I deliver to your fancy the copyright of the idea of putting together an ode to a pair of nut-crackers, in Greek. Those two furry lovers would wake up the dry atmosphere of the 'Varsity, if anything would.

Coming down, Marsalys chatted in spasms—the path was very uncertain—about the relations of the poets to Nature. The sweep of her mind is bewildering. It is almost uncanny to listen to the easy way she moves about among Homer, Dante, Pindar, Goethe, Clough, Arnold, Hugo, and a dozen more. One of her points struck me as happy: Byron came into the region of great feelings, but instead of getting possession of them, he allowed them to get possession of him, and so was

JOY OF TYROL

swept like a swimmer upon a stream, instead of damming the stream and making it obey him. Longfellow was far too self-possessed and respectable to be carried away by any feelings; they would never have dared to suggest flight to the good old man. "Where rose the mountains there to him were friends" was the natural



expression of Byron's mind; to Longfellow such an idea was impossible. He looked out of his handsome old face for metaphors, and when he found them made frames of them for his own portrait. (Here came the English ginger.) Of course an American would find it hard to understand what was going on among the mountains and forests and streams,

when no one but Nature was talking and no reporters were present.

The gem of all was this: To be friends with Her you must first be friends with yourself. All intimacy is one, and above all lessons one has to learn that Nature plays "the game."

Seer or girl as may be, when we got back she satisfied what her brother called a "thirst magnificent" on a tall

WEISSLAHNBAD-IN-TIERSERTHAL,

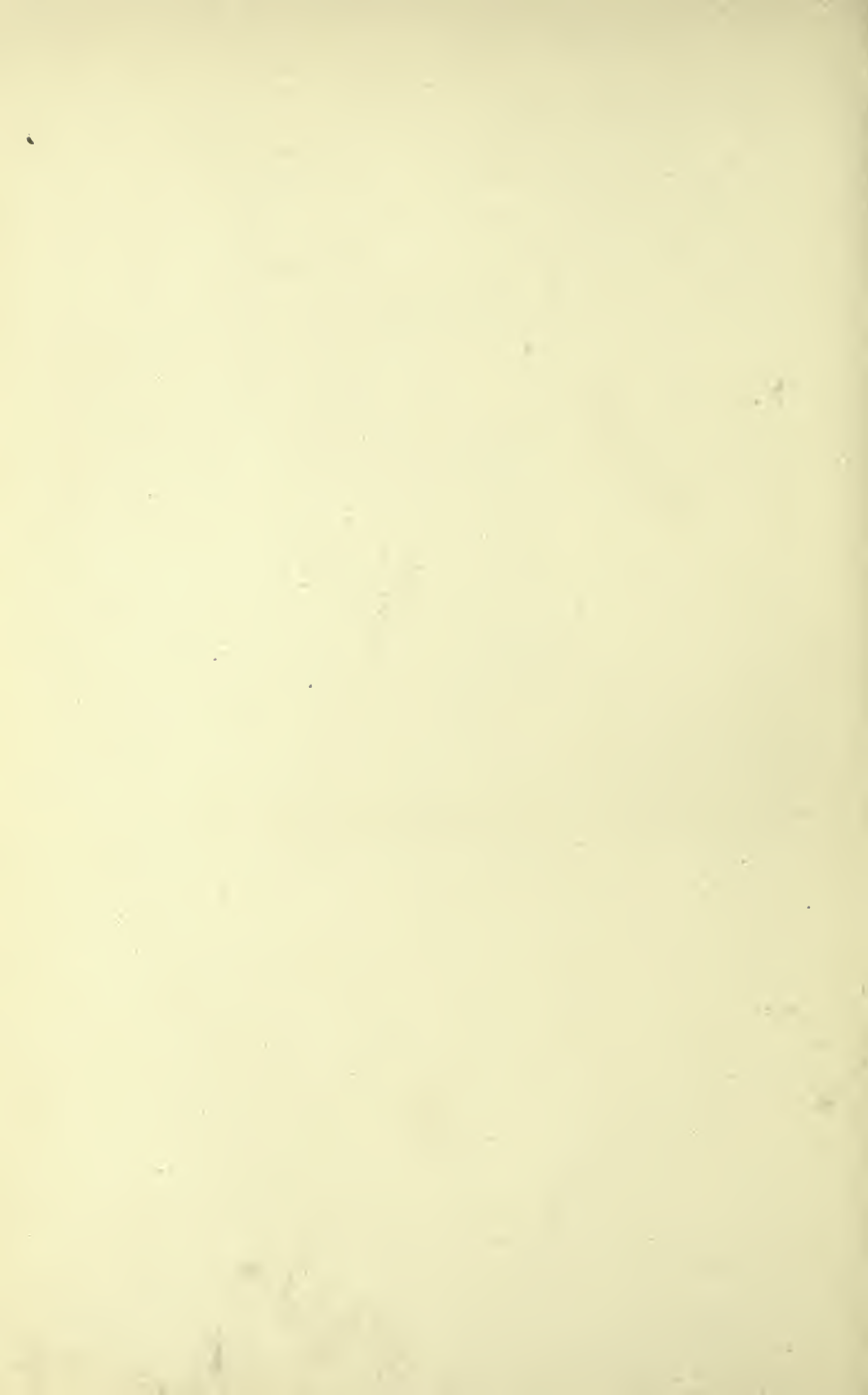
vase of Pilsen beer, which to a long thirst is not only comforting but has the right to jeer at Rechabites.

I wonder what was the special tippie of Deborah ?

To-morrow—Bozen. Telegram ? India ?

Soup, I understand, has moved away to-day, and Lois thinks will go direct to Scotland.

Peace to her bones and yours.



BOZEN



BOZEN

XLI

THE pestilential aunt having departed yesterday, we are here for the night. It is strange to be in the same room, at the same table again ; so much has happened since I wrote from it, so much been born, so much been buried in me : yet the same moonlit ghost of Rosengarten hovers in the East, the church spire rises black among the stars, and from its belfry the familiar metallic cough has just announced to the world that it is eleven o'clock.

Through my window the cool of the day brings kind fragrances. Earlier we had a sky of Italy, rejoiced in the hot vineyards and the cool shady lauben, and watched the whole glory of evening in radiant glow along the Dolomites : it is a versatile charm for one little place to possess.

Across the morning meadows I got Marsalys on to the Tyrolese people, and am still marvelling at the mass of information she has picked up in these few weeks about their habits, wages, interests, hardships, and religious ideas and superstitions, which all seems quite natural to her, to whom people talk without reserve as



JOY OF TYROL

to their oldest friend. She thinks them a most honest, warm-hearted race, in some ways quite heroic, and spoke with extraordinary affection. Her faculty for seeing other people's lives from the inside is spiritual genius.

Her moods are all beautiful, but when sympathy is uppermost—— I wish I could reproduce her voice ! I wish—— Heaven send this correspondence in snippets is not getting on your nerves. I am doing what I can for you, but I realize that I am only giving you odd incidents of our day, and quite probably leaving out the things of which you would like to hear.

We passed one or two roadside votive slabs, set up to the devout memory of unfortunates killed by accident on the spot where the shrines were erected. These are not infrequent hereabout, and bear a crude oil picture of the catastrophe, a foreground of pink purgatorial flames, and an inscription of the name and age of the deceased, coupled with a request that the passer-by will kindly say a prayer for his soul in torture.

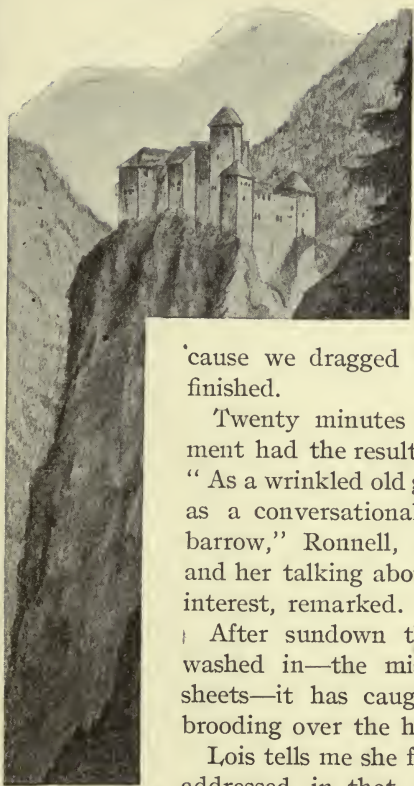
Ronnell was profanely indignant over one which implied that a dog was in some way responsible for the death of its master in an avalanche, and pretended to give this as the solemn translation of the Siste Viator :

“ On to your knees, all ye mountains, and get the winds to help you ; pray with all your lungs, ye priests, and if all blow hard enough you'll put the fire out.”

Marsalys whittled these appeals down to this :

“ The relations of So-and-so, killed on this spot by ——, will be glad if, on their authority, passers-by will inform his Creator that he was a much more respectable and God-fearing person than was generally known.”

She said “ generally ” out of her dimples ; it was delicious ! Her feeling about the Almighty, and His



absolute knowledge of what is going on, is not quite the Roman standpoint! or the barley-water Protestant?

At Blumau, where one gets a train, she was seized by nervous greed for this castle, and now declares it a cut-up caricature, be-

'cause we dragged her away before it was finished.

Twenty minutes in a third-class compartment had the result below as a reminiscence. "As a wrinkled old great-grandmother, a gem; as a conversationalist, an ungreased wheelbarrow," Ronnell, who listened to Marsalys and her talking about the vines, with amused interest, remarked.

After sundown the outline overleaf was washed in—the mists were floating in grey sheets—it has caught the spirit which was brooding over the hour.

Lois tells me she found a letter addressed in that undisguisable handwriting to Marsalys, in a Hotel Splendid envelope, and committed it to flames at once. So only Soup and her Maker will ever know what was in it.

Soup and her Maker—it looks mighty profane! No; He also made the baboon and the viper.

To this listen with all your might.

Half through dinner, a well-rounded Hamburger, of



JOY OF TYROL,

commercial appearance, after clicking his heels together and bowing to us all, took a spare seat at our table. Ronnell muttered "interloper." I handed him salt, pepper, and toothpicks, wished him a "good appetite," and gave him no further thought.

Not so Marsalys. Her sympathies are like a grocer's cheese-tasting tool—they get at a piece of the inside of people. She somehow made a connection with the man's inner feelings; he stopped suddenly his very



audible munching, and said, glaring hard at his big beer-glass, "Ach! it is never amusing to have a telegram that your brother-in-law is dead already."

Seeing the situation, I bungled out my sympathy, hoped he would get a train as early as he wished to his widowed sister, shook hands with him, and went into the hotel to arrange the forwarding of our letters.

And then a telegram—the telegram, I do not doubt—arrived, and—cruel irony—the porter gave it to me to take to her.

When I went outside, I saw her standing talking to the fat person still, who was holding her hand as if he were drowning. I shall never forget the sight of that typically English girl, looking very like a goddess beneath the electric lamps, surrounded by people feeding hard at little round tables, with her hand in the affectionate grip of a burly foreign stranger.

What had happened was simple enough. Deep had

BOZEN

called unto deep. She had detected pain in the man's face, and the tone of her voice was of such a sort that he had first spoken to his beer-pot, and later had taken her hand and kissed it, and told her everything like a child—that it was a great tragedy, that his sister had been in a lunatic asylum for years, and that he, a bachelor, was going back to be both father and mother to the children.

There are phlegmatic people who nurse absurd preju-



dices about us, but they forget the map of Europe, and everything else, when they come within the zone of the Angels.

Now, when you realize that I have sat tight and driven my pen, though that telegram has come, you will, I hope, appreciate the fact that I am keeping a level head. It is too great a matter to be foolish over. I am content to wait and to bear, or—— Good Heavens, how tired I am !

I shall to bed, where, if I dream, I dare to prophesy the shape in which forms will come to me on those

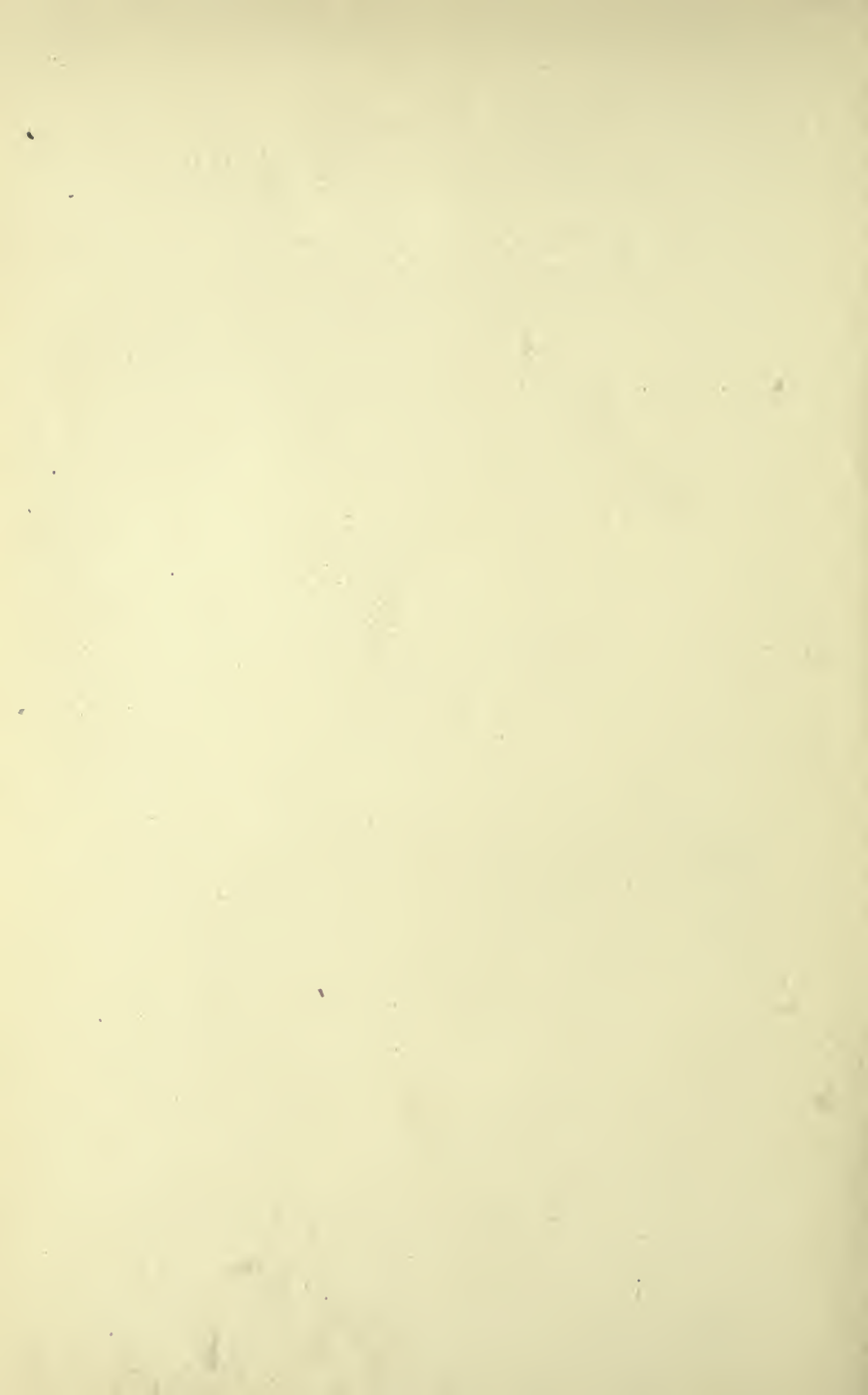
JOY OF TYROL

strange plains whereon we wander through the dumb hours.

There will be a little beetle, self-conscious, called by my very name, and there will come from the forests a great tusked creature who, as it hurries by, will jerk with its toe the little beetle, and leave it lying on its back. And so it will lie, peering into the night sky, and the stars will marshal themselves into eight great letters built up as of pearl, and the silver of the Milky Way will twist itself round them as a frame.

MERAN
XX





MERAN

XLII

I HAVE no use for the Fates—a tricky and exasperating lot. This is the first time a first-class all-fired curiosity has laid hold on me—yet from the time I held that telegram in my fingers last night until now, at 1 p.m., when we sit waiting for the girls, I have had not a chance of hearing anything about it!

Early this morning I heard a note squeezed under my door: “You boys must breakfast alone, and walk to Meran as planned; we can’t. Marsalys is over-tired. I shall give her breakfast in her room. We will drive over and meet you at lunch.”

It evidently was the S.P.C.I. ultimatum.

The walk here, through vineyards for the most part, was like passages from the Revelation. We got long vistas through corridors of arched vines, as if we had come into dwellings of the soul; we looked along avenues of light, soaked green as it filtered through the leaves, among which red wine was ripening to make blood for men.

Even Ronnell fell under the influence of it, and mumbled sagaciously and tenderly about his sister, after a manner which did abundant credit to his powers of observation.

Out of colours he gets, I fancy, but small, if any,

JOY OF TYROL

solace. The leaves—washed with copper-sulphate—like peacocks' feathers, and lustrous as beetles' wings, seemed to him quite unimportant; but he himself unconsciously splashed our path with a lustre of his own by what he said, and what he did not say, about her.

I had a curious psychological experience as we walked. There shot out of my memory that line, "Oh those mountains, their wonderful movement," and before I could count two I was staggering along quite giddily, and had to sit down and wipe the perspiration off my brow. It was the first time I had thought of it since the day on the Brenner—it seems years ago—when I was just beginning to let the scales drop from my eyes.

But here they are——

Late.

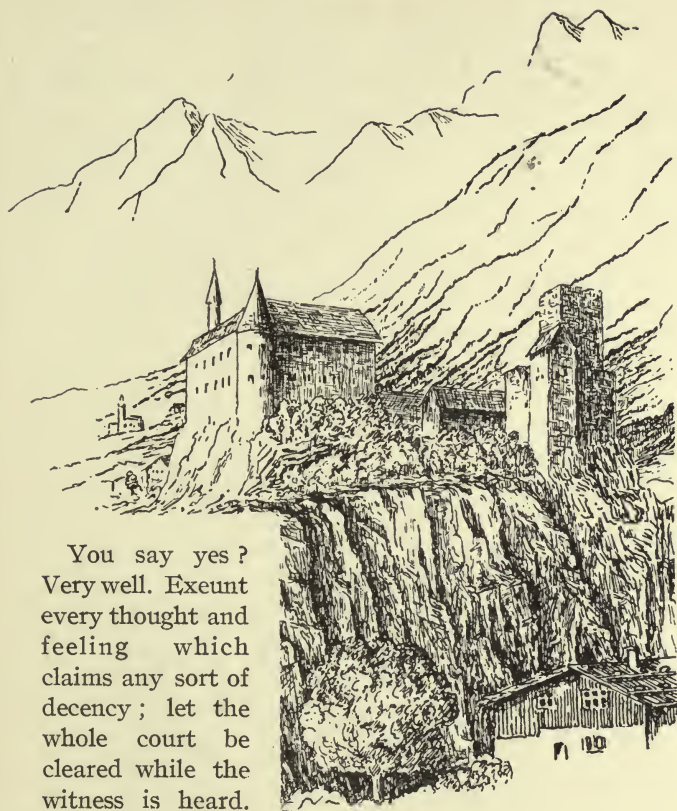
They are all abed. We lunched as if nothing had happened, or was ever likely to happen, outside of the humdrum routine of things, and afterwards drove behind two buxom mares to the Castle of the pristine Lords of Tyrol.

On the way up we talked in driblets about the colours which the view disclosed, white rivers of road, twisting yellow roads of water, splashes of corn-gold, maize-green, flax-blue, and the peacock feathers spread across the vineyards, concealing what was uppermost in all our minds with elaborate deceitfulness.

When we came in sight of the Castle, a decaying casket which once held the scrip of the fortunes of Tyrol, and seven centuries since was by all appearance a magnificent building, Marsalys got out and put it down on paper for you.

After which—— But stop! Up to this point I have held myself decently, have I not? I have been as respectably consecutive as you would expect.

MERAN



You say yes ?
Very well. Exeunt
every thought and
feeling which
claims any sort of
decency ; let the
whole court be
cleared while the
witness is heard.
It is just this :

We went into the Castle under escort of a female guide, who took us at once into the dining-hall, which smelt of grand old-world chivalry, and set upon us the spell of the Middle Ages——when of a sudden, as if in a dream, I found myself in hell itself——Julienne P. C. was at the other end of the accursed room with her genteel, overpaid companion.

As a matter of choice I should immensely rather

JOY OF TYROL

have met Satan himself, claws and all ; one knows where one has him, and the legends lend him a certain consistency of conduct ; but this blend of viper and baboon done up in the skin of a woman—— Listen to this : for brutal confidence in her inhuman self, it was the most infernal scene a man could look upon.

She hurried straight across to Marsalys, in her silly little shoes with the rustling noise that gets on one's teeth, and burst out glibly : " Delighted to meet you again, my dear Miss Ronnell ; and are you going to spend the rest of your charming days in the East ? Lois told me about your scheme at Carlsbad, you know."

The pointed, vulgar insistence of it stunned me, and as I stood there, with what a murderer must feel in his heart, I suppose, a soft trembling " No " crumpled up any faculties that were not already black with rage, and I retreated to the courtyard, where Ronnell at once joined me. He is a singularly sane chap on occasion, grasped the situation at once, saw that Lois and Marsalys could deal better with the " cat " than he or I could, and told them that we would walk back to Meran.

It became evident on our walk that he knows more than I supposed, as he never mentioned his sister's name to me, but gassed away about Andreas Hofer as hard as he could all the way down, because, he said, being within easy reach of his pub and in his valley, it was the only proper topic.

" A village publican against the world " is a phrase he seemed proud of, and I dare say it was pretty much that with Napoleon on the-rampage.

We found an out-of-the-way restaurant for tea, where, out of any human earshot, I induced him to open his lips more frankly than is quite natural to him.

" I don't somehow quite tumble to your aunt. She's

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careless with her claws. It was jolly rough on good old Marsalys to have her tyres punctured like that by a comparative stranger, when even we hadn't mentioned the matter to her. I thought she was going to have a fit—her lips went so white and her eyes blazed so. Yes, old chap, she's quite as impossible an old dragon as you think her—perhaps worse."

The "we" I enjoyed greatly; the "perhaps worse" disturbed me. I angled for something out of his interview with her at Bozen, but only got a queer little admission that he cultivates the art of forgetting things unpleasant in people, and fights against a cynicism which is far too natural to him, lest he should lose the power of seeing things in their own fair light.

You can imagine the spirit of uneasiness with which we gathered for dinner. Personally, I shrank from meeting her eyes, but she triumphed gloriously by promptly putting us all at our ease—never mentioned anything to do with herself; chaffed me about the impression probably being left on your mind that I am a good business man wasted, being apparently such a capable liar *re* distances walked and climbed, and urged me to underline the champagne qualities of the air, etc.; chaffed Ronnell for looking thinner since his twenty-miles tramp this morning; and chaffed Lois—who didn't want to go out again—about the unique programme of an al fresco concert she wouldn't allow her to miss, even if she had happened to be in bed with measles. I have never known tact carried to such perfection, which is only another way of saying I have never known such an unselfish person.



JOY OF TYROL

We went to her concert, and under artificial light she tried to catch the effect of the fine promenade you have just seen.

I meant to give you some impressions of this lovely place, which sits among its mountains like a queen, but that plaguy woman has wiped every impression off my mind except the singeing memory of herself, her coarse callousness about other people's feelings, her intolerable, shameless interference—— But this cannot interest you. Forgive me. I ought to consume my own smoke. Nevertheless, when a man has something like a gigantic steel fork stuck through his chest, which causes immeasurable agony, whatever way he turns and every breath he draws, he needs must scream out to somebody. You see, I cannot escape from it. This woman's very blood is in me. I had better stop.

To-morrow we go by early train to Mals, and to-morrow I will give you, if I can, something more profitable. To-morrow! How I dread it.

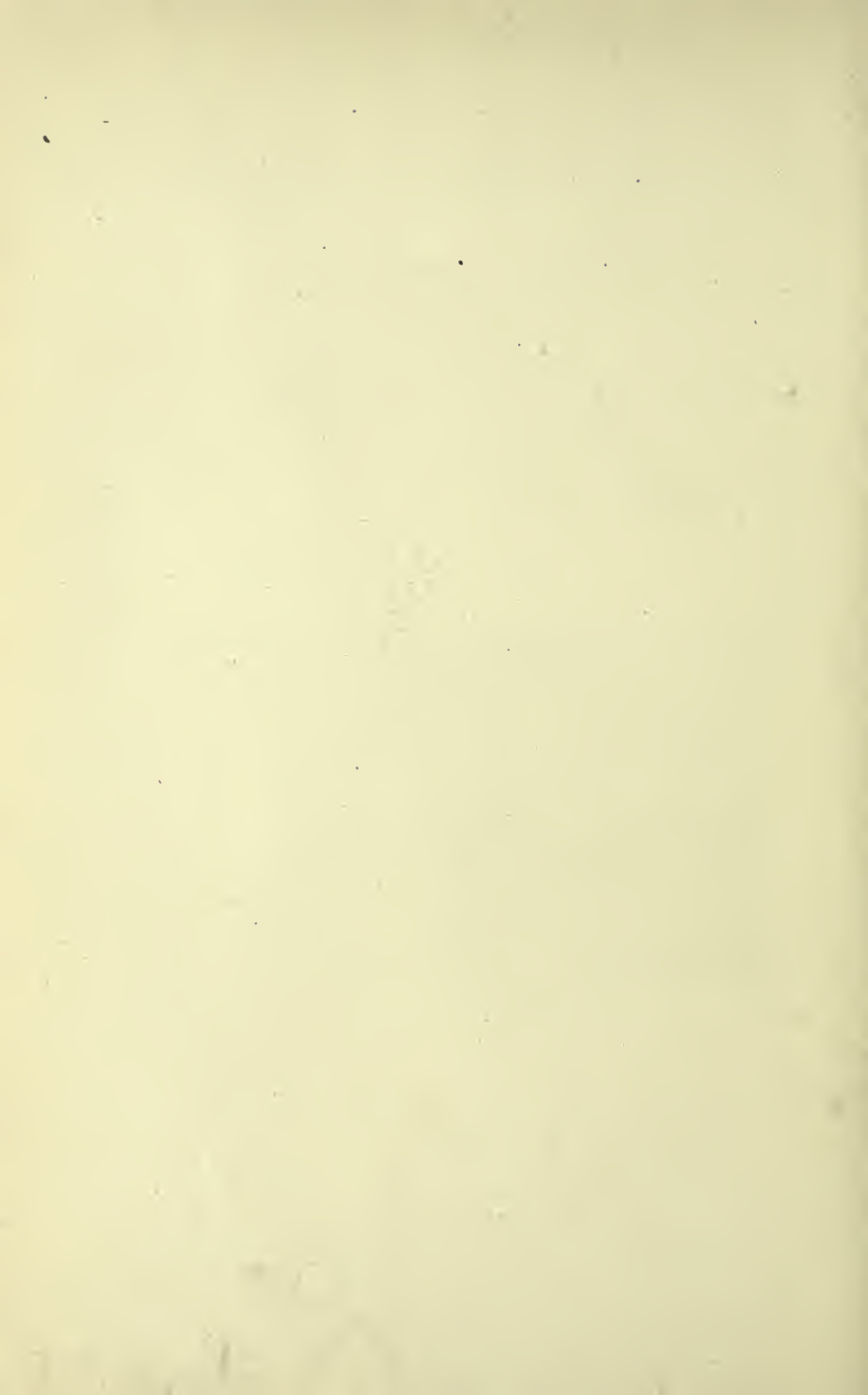
Hang it all! I'll finish on a better key, and help you to remember that we are not at Margate:

“ In the evening-glow,
How sharp the silver spear-heads charge
Where Alp meets Heaven in snow.”

BOBBIE BROWNING,

NAUDERS





NAUDERS

XLIII

At breakfast I received the skeleton view of Meran you will find overleaf.

From her weary eyes it must have been done after a sleepless night, soon after dawn.

We were off at 7 a.m., and, violation of tramp law though it seemed, we got into a train like parcels, with a contented sensation of being despatched forthwith.

I can conceive no Saint so saintly that he would not break any law to get away from so finely finished a consummation of all that is least desirable in every sense as her we fled.

It was a queer little train.

Ronnell made it queerer still.

Before we started, he was nosing after sporting papers with pictures of dogs, and suddenly whirled in upon us two women with :

“ These ladies want seats ; the rest of the firsts seem to be full.”

They were unscrupulously American—one a widow, with a face to win you at sight, a sense of the comic, and an itch for talking ; the other, her companion, reluctant and evasive, about whose mouth wrinkles had crowded up, as Ronnell explained later, “ to watch the incessant fray with porters dealing with ponderous,

JOY OF TYROL

enormous trunks, and to help her to scream orders with sufficient emphasis."

The widow lady, after a glance at our sparse luggage, opened with a guess that we were English and great



travellers, and within ten minutes, by which time she was

calling us her dear friends, said to her companion, "Say! Miss van Dunop, how Dick would just trot in a pair with him," explaining to us that "Dick was her pet nephew, and reckoned the wittiest young gentleman in the State of Texas."

NAUDERS

Some silly thing Ronnell had got off had tickled her, and after that hint about "Dick" he became the flippantest young gentleman in the state of explosion.

At a mention of the United States he went off :
"United States of what ?"

She. "United States of America, of course."

He. "But why 'United' and why 'States' ?"

And after a pause, during which she seemed to be pondering what particular species of lunacy he favoured, again :

He. "Tell me in a word, what is America ?"

She, with spirit. "America ! The United States ! Why, it's a great Nation."

He, with icy suavity. "You can hardly call it that, can you ? An amorphous congeries of Teutons, Hebrews, Cockneys, Red Indians, and Irishmen all mixed up, with only one ideal common to the whole boiling !"

It was an imperturbably good-natured lady. She said to her companion, with a genuine smile :

"See here, Miss van Dunop, I guess he's got right in there," and, getting back to the battle, told Ronnell, "It's a soil, a native land, that's what America is."

I liked her final, triumphant note. It seemed to settle the matter in a neatly rounded style. I forgot Ronnell's way.

"But," he continued, "any Weary Willie or outcast, or clever criminal, from Moscow, Seven Dials, or Timbuctoo, might alight in New York to-morrow, and within a month be a confirmed and enthusiastic citizen of the United States of America, without having had time to get a single feeling or tradition of the 'soil' into his system !"

JOY OF TYROL

A flash of silence followed this, during which the lady watched the passing landscape, then with a twinkle she returned to the field :

" Say, now, how would you answer if any person asked you ? "

He was quite prepared for her, and got off a fairly good thing, which he said with irritating deliberateness :

" Oh, well ! I think I should reply that, in spite of stars and stripes, spangled banners, and squealing eagles, the great Republic known as the United States of America is—ah, simply a point of view—to the old inhabitants an idol to be worshipped, and to newcomers, if they have any sense of humour, an enormous joke."

She made no attempt to kill ; she only told Dunop she would " give five thousand dollars to have dear Dick here, cos we'd have such a dandy time."

Sweet and most friendly we found her, and so full of admiration for our vagabond ways, that she left the train at a wayside station " inconsolable at the thought that perhaps in the unaccountable Providence of Heaven we might never meet again."

Marsalys made the solitary bad shot of her life in calling Ronnell a gamin for teasing the old dear. To me it was wonderful that he should be so completely master of tact, standing into the breach like Marcus Curtius, and dropping into conversation with strangers in as brave a spirit as the Roman hero confronted by a hole not less perplexing !

They have fine stuff in the veins of them, the Ronnells.

We ? —— !

We have an aunt who——

Excuse me, I am sorry, I cannot help it.

I am neither a Sanitary Inspector nor a Master in Lunacy, therefore :

Who——

NAUDERS

At Schlanders, half-way between Mals and Meran, the knife of climate comes down across the valley. Comfort and Ice, Vine and Potato, Chestnut and Pine, make adieux to each other.

The Dolomites, without whom the sun could never make itself wholly intelligible to the earth, refuse to follow farther.

The laughter of the South dies away, and the white-capped Ortler takes you in charge.

The way you come into its kingdom is grateful unto the soul.

At first it is only an uncertain puff of cloud far up ; slowly it shows its clear dome above all ridges, and from Mals is sovereign lord for miles and miles, in a huge radius, the highest thing in the whole world.

Absolute—to use that happy adjective—it welcomes you, watches you, dominates you, and follows your doings for what Ronnell calls “ multitudinous ” hours.

Outside the gate Marsalys took its portrait through an unsymmetrical frame of the aged and infirm city wall.

Later she put down jottings for something further.

The hills were hung with lacework of thin snow, the ground springy as thick carpet, and at St. Valentine-on-the-Heath, where we had lunch facing its lake, the happy influence of a little reminiscence burst the shackles of our nervous strain.



JOY OF TYROL,

I told of an English undergraduate who once spent many greedy hours fishing for the trout the lake contains, of how he caught nothing, and had, in fact, not a single rise, of how he fell, and, to save his face, grubbed in the soil for worms, and having found half a dozen, murmured "Six trout," and of how at the end of a long hour he re-interred five worms and a half, and cast half a worm into the lake.



Marsalys shook with the humour of it, which had not occurred to me. "To think that Tyrolese trout, who think in German and live within sight of that, would bother about flies or worms!"

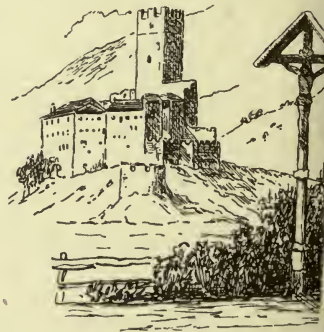
I promised to give you the story if she showed you what they feed on.

When the waitress brought the bill, she asked her how they were caught.

"Gracious lady, with nets, of course."

When the Encyclopædia of Benefactions comes to be written, I am prepared to do an article on the beneficent influence of sheer silliness, based on to-day's experience, a couple of incidents in no wise either serious or even sensible having lifted us out of the deep-sea ooze of depression.

The threefold music of little Nauders has ceased. The hour after sunset was full of it. From the church bells it clanged up and down the valley like the voices of prophets rousing dead centuries to life; it tinkled from the necks of home-coming cows, with the



NAUDERS

peace-begetting sound which suggests the song that Alpine flowers might sing out of their bells ; and it rattled from the pert goats, snipping its way about the air like gibes of street urchins.

The necessity of stars is upon me.



They have helped me more than once ; maybe they will do it yet again.

Three Hours Later.

When man's soul is sore let him lay it beneath the stars. They have the healing art. And if his pride be gashed, and his heart bruised, by the offences of a ruthless kinswoman, let him go into a night full of other worlds, for he will escape from himself ; the silence will clasp him round about ; perchance also he may hear voices.

I held to the curling highroad for five miles—never passed a soul—to a point from which I looked across the baby river Inn to the Swiss heights.

It is a view to set to music.

One seemed to be seeing something secret and sacred,

JOY OF TYROL

something never shown before, something that was visible by the soul as much as by the eye.

Mother Nature! What a lady she is! So gentle and kind. She seemed to be by my side. A dear mother. How much one gets from a woman one cannot ever deserve.

There were the chasm below, the sleeping crests far above, and the pale little stream drinking in the silver, gleaming with the delight of a great thirst satisfied, white stars on its lips and broken bits of moon. And there were the great hills on either side of it, dreaming of their foster-child as it learned to run and feed itself on the cream of the night.

I never loved the moon before.

She seemed to me a cold, leisurely spectator, careless of our doings; but as I looked into that profound abyss she set her kind light upon the wonder of it, and up out of the stream, that hurrying stream on foot for the Danube and the Ocean, came one clear word which haunts me still—wanted!

I have a jolly bedroom, with a rounded window at the corner of it. When I began to write I watched the last footprint of Yesterday upon the West; now the grey fingers of To-day are loosening the Eastern gate.

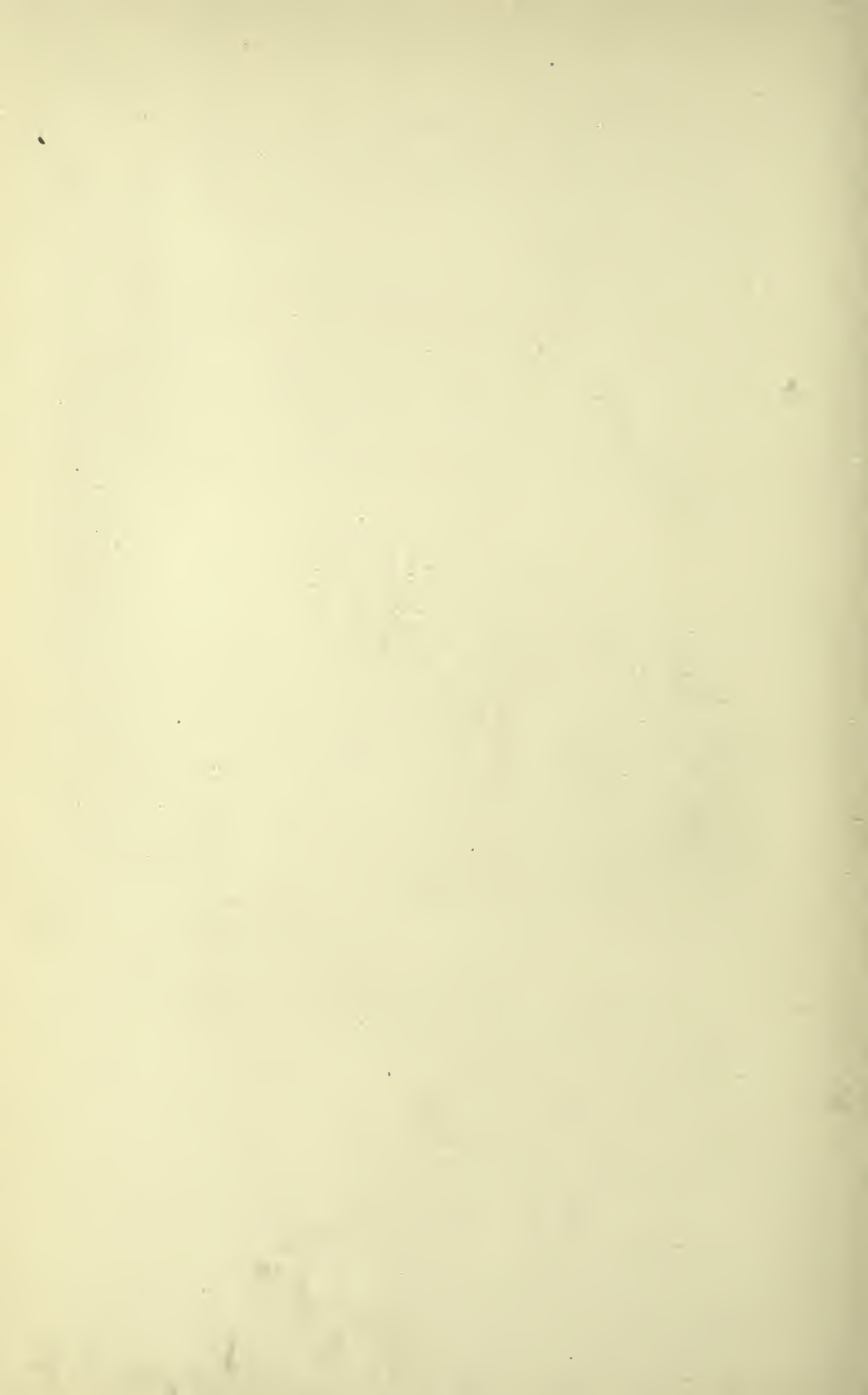
I am not able to tell you much. There is a Temple into which a man is sometimes called, and he enters it alone.

And the only tongue which is spoken there is one which no written character has ever been able to convey.

Good night, dear man!

FEUCHTEN . IN .
KAUNSERTHAL





FEUCHTEN-IN-KAUNSERTHAL

XLIV

I WAS out of bed at 5 a.m., watching the sunrise, and there in the street was Marsalys already, waiting for Lois.

She touched the first hour of the village day with her incomparable grace, greeting the yawning peasants, chatting with children till they laughed merrily, stroking the soft noses of cows which came to her to be caressed on their way to high pastures. In three days at such a place she might be the uncrowned Queen of men and animals.

Five dogs and a goat followed her to where this sketch was done, and sat in a circle round her.

We walked over my last night's ground to Hoch Finstermunz, Ronnell and I together. I had not pluck to face those haunted miles with her.

After lunch she insisted on going down to Alt Fin-



JOY OF TYROL

stermunz, where the old road is, so I came close to my little stream.

The sun was blazing on the Tyrolese rocks, infinity of pines clad the Swiss side, the ruined custom-house gazed into the water—in twenty minutes it was all on paper.

It was a happy idea of ours to walk a hundred miles a week, and we have done it comfortably. It is an honest pleasure just to foot it by the open road among the hills, and something more to walk with a stream down its valley within the sound of its laughter all the way.

I had it all with Marsalys for one most sacred hour, and if in a word I may describe what the last two days have been to her, I should say, in the phraseology of the Mystics, she has been

quietly feeding upon the will of God.

She——

At a village with the absurd name of Pfunds, while horses were being in-spanned, we visited the birthplace of the poet Senn, of whose lines "Adler, Tiroler Adler," we four present you with a collaborated translation:

"Eagle! Tyrol's Eagle!
Say, why thou art red!
It's the smile of the hot sunshine,
It's the blush of the brimming wine,
And the blood of my foes that I've shed
That have stained me red."

We got amusement out of Ronnell over the transla-



FEUCHTEN-IN-KAUNSERTHAL,

tion of some other things, in especial an inscription on a modest hostel where we stopped for coffee :

Wir bauen Hauser hoh' und fest
Worin wir sind nur fremde Gast;
Dorf wo wir müssen ewig seyn
Da bauen wir gar wenig ein.

He has picked up a score or so of words from his dog studies, beyond which a few drinks and cigars are his



tether, but when Lois gave this as :

"We build houses high and strong wherein we shall never be more than passing travellers; in the Town where we have to live for ever we build precious small ones," he would not have it at all, and forthwith adapted it for the Ritz or the Carlton thus: "We erect palatial hotels for a few days' stay in town, though our own houses may be mere villas."

Twice we halted—once for a sketch to show you the character of the Ober-Innthal, once on advice from our driver at a votive chapel with this very business-like inscription on its foundation-stone :

"Built 1842. We promised it during a cattle plague. We said prayers to S. Martin, and were freed from the dreadful plague. Holy Martin, pray for us."

We dined at a village reduced by fire three years ago to mere outlines, now brand-new with roofs of

JOY OF TYROL



uncompromising red tiles, walls white with cement of yesterday, and over most of the front doors tin fire-insurance labels.

Ronnell was pertinent about the labels: "Where did S. Florian come in?"

This Florian, whose strenuous figure is familiar here in wooden statuesque form, emptying a bucket of white liquid on to vermilion flames, is a handy Saint, so highly considered that many a cottage is fortified by a big bracket on its wall whereon it stands as a guarantee of safety.

Ronnell thought it mighty hard on untutored minds to have to choose between the Saint and his white liquid and a decent Insurance Company with a big capital, and he asked the landlord who paid for the new fountain in the middle of the village, which is surmounted by a Florian with the expression of a man never known to fail in his job.

The landlord knew no English, and none of us was prepared to play interpreter.

It was an out-of-the-way meal, nuggets of chamois mixed with stewed pears, and water full of phosphates with an ugly taste, but, as they say here, "Hunger is the best cook."

Dear man, now take off your shoes.

It was Holy Ground.

From that new-laid village among the incredibly old mountains, I walked up here with her.

Just she and I and the silent Night.

The châlets' eyes were shut, not a light was left. We had it to ourselves, and the moon filtered little

FEUCHTEN-IN-KAUNSERTHAL,

drops of silver through the trees on to her as she talked.

I had little sleep last night, and must compress words. She has vowed everything she possesses, or ever will possess, to what she calls "people in the dark, who can't live except by the sacrifice of others."

This she calls "the straight thing." In her I see the incarnation of every ideal which ever fluttered across my vision; in her——

Sir, to show you I am in control of my senses, I beg to state that the room in which I write costs 1 Kr. per night. In terms of what I shall get for my money, it is threepence for every hour of sleep I am likely to find.

So late and so silent, I may as well say that that family living, with its good-natured Squire, gouty doctor, roomy Rectory, and snoring bucolics, has bothered and vexed me every time I have looked at her since we left Cortina, because she seems so far removed from slums.

With one sentence she has dismissed my cloud.

It is an Imperial Creed in an imperial heart.

The air to-night is crisp with frost.

To-morrow——

XLV

FEUCHTEN-IN-KAUNSERTHAL.

Had I skill of Meissonier and vision of Turner, for right eye a microscope, for left a telescope, I might look an unwonted object, but I should be able to let you into things about to-day which, being as God made me, you will never know.

A day as intense as the heart of a forget-me-not, wide-spread as a cedar built floor upon floor into Heaven,

JOY OF TYROL

a day of mosses, ferns, and gentle creatures, of rocks and veteran pines daring the horizon, a day of glacier ice curling earthward from a world of snow.

Let your imagination loose upon it !

My earliest consciousness was of shrivelling at the touch of my sponge, which had frozen stiff. I staggered half-asleep into my clothes by candlelight, and faintly remember struggling with my boots—cold as a rattling skeleton.

Marsalys and I went forth ahead into the slaty hour, she in great spirits, chattering gaily ; for myself, only my teeth chattered till I was warm enough to complain that Lois had called us too early, that there was no reasonable ground for supposing the sun would rise, and that it seemed likely to be a dreary time before we should know whether it intended to, etc., which she choked off with :

“ And then I looked up toward a mountain-tract,
That girt the region with high cliff and lawn :
I saw that every morning, far withdrawn
Beyond the darkness and the cataract,
God made Himself an awful rose of dawn.”

It rolled out with a soft and silky cadence, but I told her that quoting Tennyson before 5 a.m. on a frosty morning was the nearest thing to a criminal offence I could imagine her capable of. However, if you stop a spring in one place, it bursts out in another, and she has let me have it hot in the matter of quotations at intervals, each one fitting as neatly as this.

To a dull brain it sounds amazing, this marvel of memory. One gets as much from her in real education in a day as a University gives in four years—ahem !

I wish I could hand on some of the weird sense of mystery which comes over you when you find yourself

FEUCHTEN-IN-KAUNSERTHAL

on a stony path, starting off before other creatures are awake, the cattle still sleeping fast, and not even a bird intending to chirp for an hour at least. It seems such impertinence to be the first who ever burst into an unborn day, prying among its dreams before it means to get up.

Oh ! but there be times when a man knows that he is mortal, as when, clothed though he be in honest tweed, with a dish of coffee in his insides, he counts a pair of cotton gloves a god-send. At 6.30 this morning as ever was, I would have swopped the advowson of my living for two hot potatoes, one for each trouser pocket, and the dense multitude of black pines crowding the slopes on either side looked down and jeered.

Two hours later we came into sunshine where I was hot enough and to spare. Marsalys sat down to this sketch of the path, and pertly asked if I still hankered after more sleep and a later start !

I wandered about. The sunlight on the thin veil of gossamer, pierced by the heads of flowers, gave a beautiful reality to every fairy-tale ever told. Purple bells hung silent, tired of ringing ; daisies gazed spellbound with the conscious surprise of existence ; dandelions held their gold up humbly, seeing the downstretched hand of God.



JOY OF TYROL

It was an hour when one might well believe anything, an hour when the little child comes back and looks out upon the world and tells what he sees, for strange, forgotten fancies tap at the front door of empty premises with taps that echo.

Coffee and ice for dulcet climes, please, but for a dozen uphill miles let it be something more solid where-with you fill a man !

Lois and Ronnell overtook and passed us, while Marsalys was still at work, and I hope I did not injure the production by declaring that she had done the one work of modern times which really mattered, having caught the "Spirit of a Foodless Morn." Under influence of her arched eyebrows, I altered the title to "Spirit of a Matchless Dawn," so you can have the latter put on the frame, with the addition "Unfinished by reason of hunger." She confessed that breakfast had been diaphanous, and that the mention of "strips of leather boiled in vaseline" would make her mouth water.



After that we sprinted, and soon arrived at the Alpine Club Gepatsch-haus, which sits on top of a wooded knoll with a wide outlook. It felt like coming home. Lois had a meal ready—the Wirth had picked us up with his telescope from miles below ; we settled down at once to a table in view of the glacier, and a S. Bernard dog, as big as a small pony, lay down beside us, licking his noble lips as a reminder that he was one of our party.

Everything was as good as one could wish for, but the view was—was a thing to prostrate oneself before, a thing to wake whole new conceptions of existence within one's soul, a thing to make one feverish and

FEUCHTEN-IN-KAUNSERTHAL

convulsive by the overwhelming imagination from which alone it could have had its birth.

This is neither silly fancy, nor sleepiness, nor hyperbole. I say deliberately that the view of the glacier, and the spreading miles of ice—what ?—was not bad !

I see that wrinkling of your sapient brow, that twitch of your thin lips, as if to say, "Go on, pull out the diapason, don't mind the roof," and I will be cut up into ladylike little pieces, and distributed for the nourishing of old maids' pussies, before I go one word more than "not bad." So now you see what you have missed !

For two delicious hours we lay on the warm rocks letting in that glacier, and coming back talked it over. She hears always such good things, I feel I must be a rank outsider to the mind of Nature, who either talks through the top of her head to me, or drugs what senses I possess. To Marsalys the world is full of voices; plants, animals, the soil, the sky, all unbosom themselves; she is in the confidence of them all, and the secret of their intimacy is just that she is she. That is all; but the all contains more within its three letters than any other word.

While she was doing this drawing of the head of the valley, with the grey glacier, she told me how she had



JOY OF TYROL

learned to sit patiently and wait till she heard the voices, and how they had been more clear and direct to her at times than common human speech.

Quite a lot of things happened as I sat at her side. I smoked. She sang a glacier song by one Milner. I watched, listened, and all the time she went on drawing. She has copied out the words for you :

“ My green is of the ice,
And my foam is of the snow—
My father and my mother—
But I leave them now and go
To the warm and flowery valley,
There to lose myself I know,
But my love is in the valley,
And unfaltering I go,
Dancing downward, wild and strong,
Ever hasting still I go,
By the whirling pools along,
Till I reach the pastures fair
Where the tinkling heifers are ;
And, though now my voice is low,
Softly you may hear the song—
My green is of the ice . . . ”

A voice like a nightingale's for range, it made glad the whole valley. We were alone—just Marsalys and I—with the hills and the stream itself ; any otherwise I should have hated it.

There is a language of the Holy of Holies ; it came naturally to my lips.

My brain reels when I cast myself back for six short weeks, when I recall how, from the first glimpse of this beautiful personality, it began to grow upon me, though I like not the phrase—— What ? You suggest ivy, do you ? Then I will come down to your level, and talk of what you can understand :

Once upon a time a neurotic Englishman reigned for

a season at the head of the table at a certain Pension among the Alps. At his own word, he had been everywhere and seen everything, and crowned his achievements with an astonishing genius for finding edelweiss. One day at lunch he described how he had once dropped on to what was considered a quite inaccessible ledge, had secured a large handful of the flowers, and was leaning over to gather more when he discovered that the bracket of rock on which he was stretched was wobbling under his weight, and the drop was 3,000 feet, without even a stray branch between him and the next world! He told us how he scrambled up with "large drops of sweat on his throbbing brow, neuralgia knifing his optic nerves," and how, "as a man who knew his way about," he made straight for the nearest inn, and "at one long gulp swallowed a litre of old red wine—straight from the bottle—to check waste of nerve-tissue." After which, such was his exhaustion, he found it necessary "to lie on his back in a meadow, with his hat over his eyes to keep the sun from his brain."

I found it beyond my power to keep a straight face as he ambled on, and to me he said defiantly :

"Within a minute I was dreaming I was in hell ; flames were all round me. I was breathing fire, and when I woke, the only living thing in sight was a cow in the distance, and my hat was in my hand, which shows how mysterious the nervous system is."

"Quite so," said I.

"Can you explain it ?" he snarled.

I said I fancied it possible that the cow had mistaken his head for a turnip, had licked it—and breathed down his open mouth—for some time before discovering that it was not a ripe turnip, and had gone away disappointed ; also that a litre of old red wine on the empty digestive organs of an acutely neurotic subject might, under

JOY OF TYROL

certain rare circumstances, produce an effect barely distinguishable from that of intoxication.

The Emperor abdicated before the sun went down upon his indignation, and sought out a pension where he would be more fully appreciated.

Now that is the sort of thing you can understand, and you can let your eyebrows and your lips do anything you like with it. It also illustrates the power of the red-herring from a distance ; you 743 miles, 684 yards, 19½ inches, from my pen—let us be exact—are going 46 hours, 32 minutes, from 5 minutes, 31 seconds ago to dare to say “ Ivy ” about her, and you see what happens.

Psychical Society papers, please copy.

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I M S T

XLVI

FROM sheer greed of the road we walked every blessed inch from Feuchten here, greed twenty-seven miles long, and still unsatisfied.

A light, whisking wind turned the highroad into a corridor of fine dust, but in hot and happy cussedness we tramped along without a disturbing thought, nor even an envious one of the cows standing knee-deep in the shallows of the river.



Lois and Ronnell passed in a cab while Marsalys was trying to catch the brilliant light of afternoon on Landeck.

Dear man, one shadow lies on these weeks, only one—the conviction that I have bored you.

Spain, Italy, France, you say I brought nearer by my daily letters, and even now write with gratitude; but I know,

JOY OF TYROL

Nevertheless you have heard all that has happened to me. I have kept nothing back, and it is the crowning of my happiness that you have written as you have.

Bless you a thousand times for all your letter means to me, for your gifts of prophecy, and now for your deep understanding.

Every one is in bed save myself and my flickering candle.

In front, under the old moon, are the mountains, our mountains of Tyrol-the-one-and-only kneeling at prayer, and this is my last night of the joy of it all.

But—no !

It comes over me that nothing, except what is evil, has an end ; every good thing is in itself a beginning of that which shall be still better.

The joy of Tyrol is just begun ; this is part of my new Faith, and well may I believe only in the best.

I, a pedestrian creature with but a small handful of ideas in his pack, a semi-detached intelligence and little window-space through which light might come—I ! out of the Garden of Life, have been allowed to pluck a perfect flower, to carry it away, to call it my own.

A Gift from the Eternal Heart, something Eternal from Him to me.

Faint pianissimo of grey breaks along the bars of the East ; it is an hour which warrants confidence. We spoke our little word once, once only with hesitating lips, remembering that the greatest of the Seers, when He flung His soul's conviction around the Universe two thousand years ago, declared that God Himself is—is just that word, that little word whose whisper is heard in every page of the silver-bound divining crystal of my lady's destiny.

Let it not seem unnatural to you that I can write so calmly ; this is a spell which brings so huge a Peace

IMST

with it that one must needs be calm. In truth, I am disturbed by one matter only—Marsalys is too big and too lowly to recognize how futile a thing I am, and she has known few men of any kind.

Yet there comes to me again and again that cry of the midnight stream, that strange confession of her heart, and therein I rest.

Of that ancient wisdom which you love I indeed have



little, and played the very fooleries of a bumblebee on its fine web when I touched it, but, by the Lord of Life, I do know some things !

I know that no mosses are more tender, no crag is firmer, no silver-birch tree bending to the wind more gracious than she, and the brave pines, though their branches make filigree jewelled in blue sky, do not bring Heaven so near to men.

I know that when into the darkness the red heart

JOY OF TYROL

of this land shines radiant in sacramental loveliness, setting a miracle within the sky, its miracle is pale before what is worked unwittingly by a heart whose secrets are disclosed with no less beauty—a heart which the Eternal, I dare to think, must call His Rosengarten, because she gathers His light so eagerly and holds it up so clearly.

The birds are waking up. I must stop.

It might interest you to hear what the others said.

Lois, never a word, but when she said good night she seemed so extraordinarily happy, and kissed me in such triumphant style, that I ought to have boxed the monkey's ears.

Ronnell said only "Jolly! jolly!" chuckled a little, and then added "The Cat!"

Soup has replied to a mischievous wire sent by Lois:

"Knew it from first; do nothing till I come to decision."

But a man can live without soup!

The smile of a new day is breaking across the sky.



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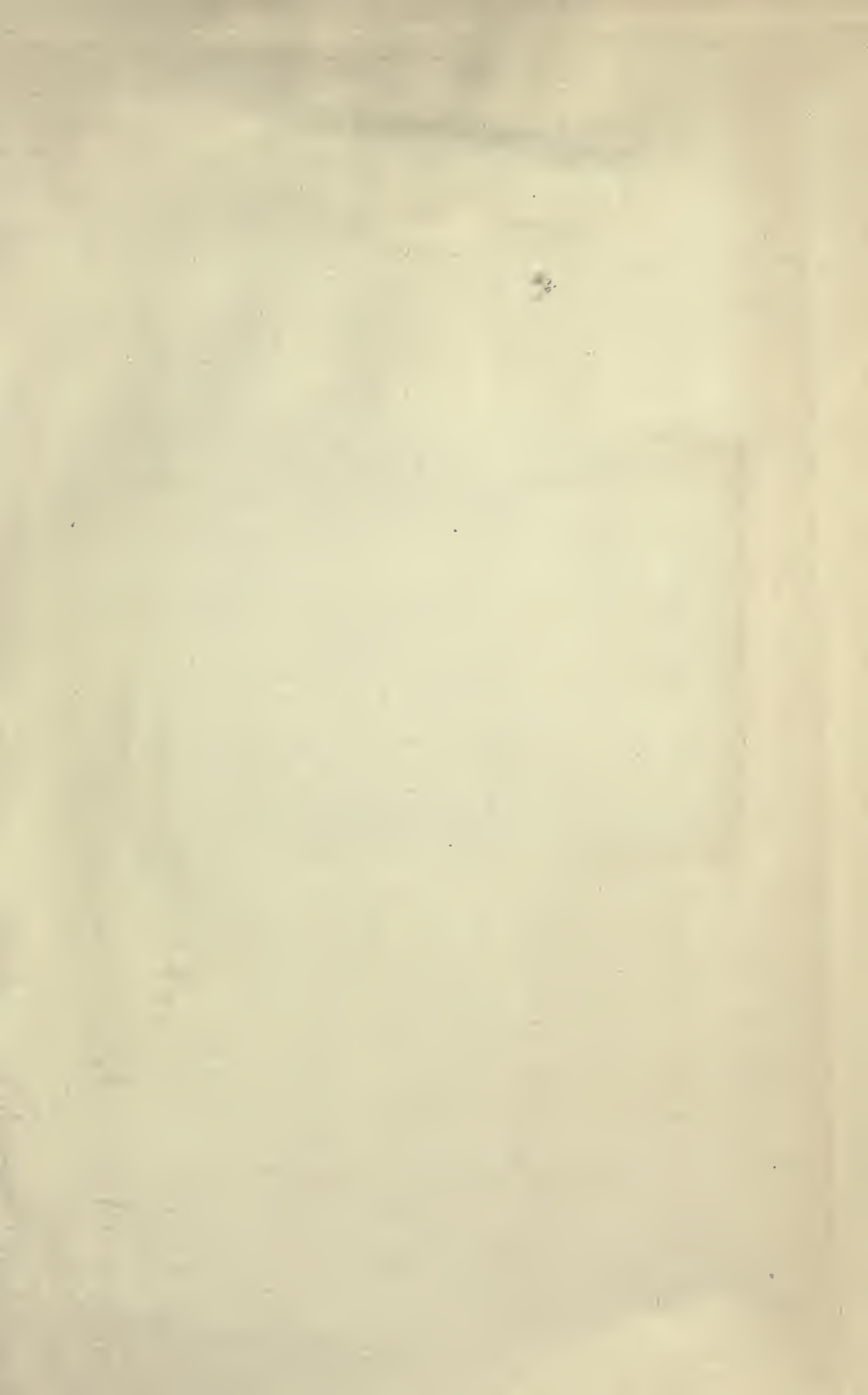
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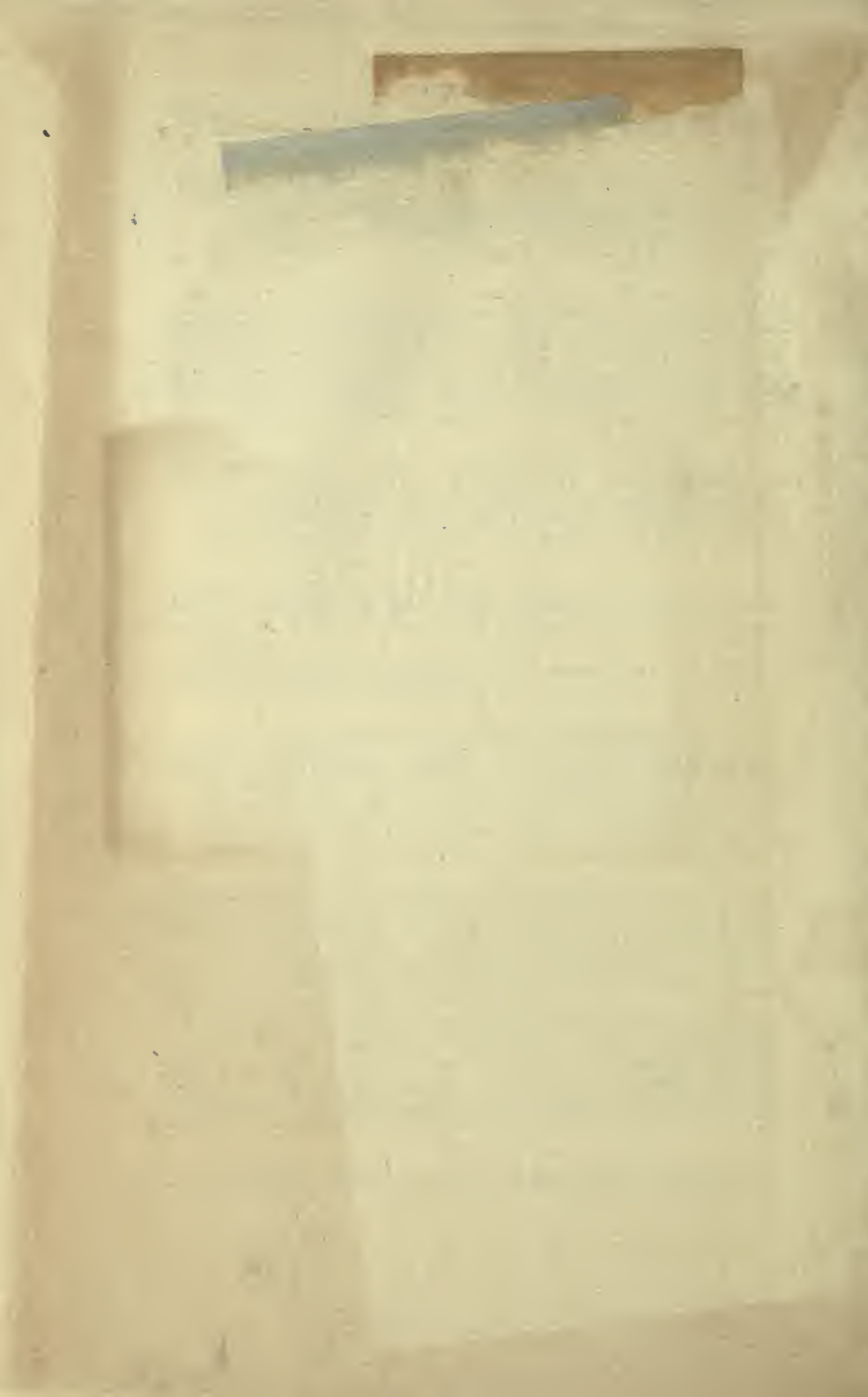
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